

Effects of The Parental Rights in Education Act on LGBTQ+ Communities in Florida

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LGBTQ+ Legislative Timeline



1977

Florida prohibits gay and lesbian individuals from adopting children. Ruled unconstitutional in 2010



2005

Florida passes a law banning gay marriage, which is later overturned by the courts



2008

Florida passes Amendment 2, which the state defines marriage between one man and one woman



2016

Florida lawmakers introduce a bill called the "Pastor Protection Act". This becomes a law.



2022

Florida introduces the "Don't Say Gay" bill, officially titled the Parental Rights in Education bill.



HB 1557: "Don't Say Gay" Overview

- Absolute bar on classroom instruction “on sexual orientation or gender identity” to prekindergarten through eighth grade except if such instruction is required for health lessons on sexual abstinence or HIV in grades six through eight. Fla Stat. § 1001.42(8)(c)(3).
- Requires district school boards to adopt procedures that comport with certain provisions of law for notifying student's parent of specified information; requires such procedures to reinforce fundamental right of parents to make decisions regarding upbringing & control of their children;



Parental+ Rights In Education Impact

Recent legislative enactments such as HB 1557 Parental Rights in Education also known as "Don't Say Gay" further excludes marginalized groups, such as LGBTQ+, in that this legislation:

1. Prohibits classroom discussion and instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity, and bans the use of personal pronouns, reproductive health instruction, and certain literature



2. Deters educators from providing LGBTQ+ support to students and families



3. Leading to poorer health outcomes for marginalized populations such as LGBTQ+ identifying persons

Why LGBTQ+ People Need Resources

LGBTQ+ people are at a greater risk for developing poor mental health and engaging in maladaptive coping behaviors such as substance abuse to cope with experiences of stigmatization and marginalization.

Data from the Trevor Project's 2023 National Survey on Mental Health of LGBTQ Young People surveyed 28 thousand youth aged 13-24 reported the following:

- 56 % of LGBTQ+ youth wanted counseling from a mental health professional but did not receive it (The Trevor Project, 2023).
- 60% of LGBT+ Youth felt discriminated against in the past year due to their gender identity or sexual orientation (The Trevor Project, 2023).
- 41 % of LGBTQ+ youth considered engaging in self-harming behaviors (The Trevor Project, 2023).
- 24 % of LGBTQ+ youth reported having been physically threatened or harmed in the past year (2023) due to their sexual orientation or gender identity (The Trevor Project, 2023)
- Nearly 1 in 3 LGBTQ+ youth said their "mental health was poor most of the time or always due to anti-LGBTQ policies and legislation (Trevor Project, 2023).

Background of Florida Resource Map (FRM)

Objective 1

The FRM was created with the intention of digitally distributing information on available community resources to vulnerable communities



Objective 2

FRM's user-friendly layout makes it easy for consumers to filter resources based on need, location, and proximity.



Why the FRM Was Created

- Social and economic disparities in marginalized populations
- Gaps in information distribution for resources
- Impact on social workers and residents

<u>Finding 1</u>	<u>Finding 2</u>	<u>Finding 3</u>
Neighborhood and individual-level socio-demographic characteristics contribute to inequitable accessibility and underutilization of resources (Shrader et al., 2023)	Inconsistent approaches to identifying and understanding marginalized groups have made it difficult for marginalized groups to access the help they need most (Giovanna, 2022)	Social workers can be critical in connecting marginalized groups to available resources (Faneras et al., 2022).

Digital Resource Advantages for Marginalized Groups

Advantage 1: FRM promotes whole centered care

Advantage 2: FRM can generate more comprehensive data





National Advocacy Efforts

- Response to discriminatory legislation by advocacy groups like HRC and GLAAD
- Condemnation of anti-LGBTQ+ measures and mobilization for change
- Importance of nationwide conversation and support for LGBTQ+ rights



Legal Precedents

Keyishian v. Board of Regents

The Court in this case established that language cannot be too vague that people “of common intelligence” will have to guess at its meaning



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The Courts addressed the constitutionality of state bans on same-sex marriage

Obergefell v. Hodges



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Don't Say Gay Legislation In other states



Texas

Restricts discussions of sexual orientation and gender identity in classrooms, particularly in primary schools

Prohibits discussing sexual orientation and gender identity in primary schools



Tennessee



Oklahoma

Would prohibit educators from teaching about sexual orientation or gender identity in kindergarten through fifth grade



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Intersection of education and LGBTQ+ rights



Young people's attitudes and perceptions of LGBTQ+ people are greatly influenced by their educational environment



92% of LGBT youth say they hear negative messages about being LGBT. The top sources are school, the Internet and their peers.



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Organizational Interviews

- JASMYN Interviewee: Dan Merkan;
- GLSEN Interviewee: Rinalda Alajaii
- The interviews showcased the impact of legislation on LGBTQ organizations and their programs
- Collaborative efforts to address challenges and support LGBTQ youth
- Gave insight into their organizational strategies that support their LGBT communities.
- Both organizations agreed that the LGBT community of Florida would benefit from the FRM.



JASMYN

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Organizational Interviews Insights

❖ JASMYN Insights:

- ❖ Years of advocacy have been dismantled at organizations like JASMYN due to nearly a decade of homophobic vitriol from
- ❖ Politicians like Ron DeSantis need to be held accountable.
- ❖ By learning about these organizations' interactions, we utilized data from the Trevor Project
- ❖ Health resources were advocated for but were simultaneously ignored by state policymakers
- ❖ .

❖ GLSEN Insights:

- ❖ GLSEN focuses more on a policy agenda
- ❖ Thinks students should be centered at the forefront
- ❖ “‘Don’t Say Gay’ has gutted LGBTQ+ resources and created a climate of hostility.” (Alajaii, 2024).
- ❖ Providing support groups for teachers and educators state-wide.

Educator Surveys



Interviewed educators in
Gainesville, Florida, and
Orange County, Florida.



The teachers shared
similarities and slight
awareness of House Bill
1557. Both educators
answered that the FRM
would benefit their students
by having more resources.



Some educators have
taken it upon
themselves to not show
so much inclusivity in
their classrooms in fear
of losing their jobs due
to “Don’t Say Gay”



Long Term Implications

[10] There are currently 429 bills passing through state legislatures aimed at limiting the rights of transgender and gay people in America.

Which statement comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right?

Response	Topline	Democrat	Independent / Third party	Republican	Knows a trans or nonbinary person	Doesn't know a trans or nonbinary person
This is too much legislation. Politicians are playing political theater and using these bills as a wedge issue.	64	72	65	55	78	57
This is the right amount of legislation. Politicians are dealing with a real danger that needs to be addressed.	25	20	21	33	17	29
Don't know	11	9	14	11	5	14
Weighted N	1,220	434	344	442	400	820

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- "Don't Say Gay" laws could reinforce stigma, discrimination, and marginalization against LGBTQ+ individuals in educational settings.
- According to recent polling, 64% of all likely voters, including 72% of Democrats, 65% of Independents, and 55% of Republicans, believe that there is "too much legislation" aimed at "limiting the rights of transgender and gay people in America."



Recommendations

- ❖ **Legal Clarification Awareness Campaign:** In light of the recent legal win by Equality Florida regarding “Don’t Say Gay,” it would benefit advocates to establish an awareness campaign aimed at Florida students, families, and educators (Equality Florida, 2024).
- ❖ **Expansion of LGBTQ+ Resources on FRM through Community Partnership:** FCI would benefit from reaching out to community-based organizations (CBOs) in central Florida dedicated to LGBTQ+ issues and services to provide the FRM with a more robust array of resources.
- ❖ **Virtual Town Hall Support Groups:** Another course of action would be to sponsor open forum town halls for LGBTQ+ students and their families to better understand where community resource gaps currently lie.
- ❖ **Continue Working Towards School District Partnerships Despite Stakeholder Hesitance:** The advocacy interviews conducted for this analysis demonstrate that many school districts have been hesitant over the past few years to continue partnerships, annual survey roll-outs, and other important initiatives aimed at protecting LGBTQ+ students in schools.

Q & A ?

Thank you for your time and support.