

PFLAG SPIRIT

May 2018



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Newsletter of Parents, Families, & Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Fort Worth Chapter, P.O. Box 8279, Fort Worth, TX 76124. Published monthly except January.

MISSION: *Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends through support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and secure equal civil rights. PFLAG provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.*

May meeting

May - Our May meeting will feature Amber Briggie, Advocate/Activist/Speaker/Mamabear, who will talk about her transgender son and their life experiences. She will be answering questions after her talk. For more information about her, go to <https://www.facebook.com/amberbriggie/>.

Samaritan House Supper Club

Supper Club is a great opportunity to volunteer for a project that really makes a difference. Our dedicated group of volunteers cooks and brings food on the fourth Monday of the month, serving dinner from 5:30-6:30. The residents look forward to our meals, and we enjoy both preparing and sharing the meals with them. Please contact Christy Matthews at 805-717-2454 if you'd like to join us or contribute food.

Dates to Remember

5/3	PFLAG FtW Monthly Meeting	6:45 pm
5/10	PFLAG Dallas Monthly Meeting	7:00 pm
5/13	PFLAG Denton Monthly Meeting	3:00 pm
5/15	Food & Fun Confab	6:30 pm
5/28	Supper Club for Samaritan House	5:15 pm

PFLAG FORT WORTH INFORMATION

Meetings: First Thursday of each month at 6:45 p.m.
 First Jefferson Unitarian Universalist Church
 1959 Sandy Lane, Fort Worth, TX 76112-5412

Website: <http://pflagfortworth.org>

National Website: <http://www.pflag.org>

Newsletter: Sharon Salih, Editor
 Change of address & news to share: 817-496-1587

PFLAG/FW is not directly affiliated with any religious group.

Bills to curtail LGBT rights are failing in US legislatures

NEW YORK (AP) — In a striking shift from recent years, major legislation curtailing LGBT rights has been completely stymied in state capitols around the country this year amid anxiety by Republican leaders over igniting economic backlash if they are depicted as discriminatory.

In the thick of this year's legislative sessions, LGBT activists were tracking about 120 proposed bills that they viewed as threats to their civil rights. Not one of them has been enacted as many sessions now wind down; only two remain under serious consideration.

A key factor in the shift: In the Republican-led states where these types of bills surface, moderate GOP lawmakers and business leaders are increasingly wary of losing conventions, sporting events and corporate headquarters.

North Carolina, Indiana and Arizona were among the states that faced similar backlash in recent years over such legislation.

"Being anti-equality is not considered good politics anymore," said legislative specialist Cathryn Oakley of the Human Rights Campaign, a national LGBT rights organization.

Just two years ago, it seemed that the state-level bills might proliferate. North Carolina passed a bill restricting transgender people's bathroom access and Mississippi enacted a sweeping law allowing state employees and private businesses to deny services to LGBT people based on religious objections. Seven states have passed laws allowing faith-based adoption agencies some degree of protection if they refuse to place children with same-sex couples.

To the extent that the tide has turned, it's due partly to the fallout over the North Carolina bill in 2016. The NCAA and NBA pulled games from the state; there were projections before lawmakers rolled back the restrictions that the law would cost the state several billion dollars in lost business.

The change in momentum at the state level comes at a time when conservatives have a strong ally in President Donald Trump on the issue. His administration is seeking to exclude

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Support for same-sex marriage grows sharply in U.S., survey finds

By Alex Johnson, May 1, 2018

Support for same-sex relationships is rising sharply among all major ethnic and racial groups and most religious groups, according to a major new survey.

The American Values Atlas, conducted by the nonpartisan, nonprofit Public Religion Research Institute, comes as the [Supreme Court is considering](#) whether a Colorado baker may legally refuse to make a cake for a same-sex wedding on First Amendment grounds.

The survey found a dramatic increase in support for same-sex marriage across all racial and ethnic groups and almost all religious groups just since 2013. More than 6 in 10 — 61 percent — of Americans say same-sex couples should be able to marry legally, compared with 30 percent who are opposed. Five years ago, support was at a bare majority of 52 percent.

The survey — [one of the most extensive of its kind](#), questioning more than 40,000 Americans in weekly installments for eight months last year — focused on issues of importance to the LGBTQ community, including same-sex marriage and protections against discrimination in housing, public accommodations and employment.

It reported a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 1.2 percentage points, with a 95 percent level of confidence.

The Public Religion Research Institute found that supporters of same-sex marriage now make up majorities among Democrats and Republicans; blacks, whites and Latinos; Catholics; and most white mainline Protestant denominations.

Notably, opinions among black Americans have shifted from opposition — 41 percent supported same-sex marriage in 2013 — to support, with 52 percent signaling approval, the survey reported. Opposition among black Protestants has shifted especially strongly, falling from 57 percent in 2013 to just 43 percent, it said.

"The country has reached a milestone moment in the debate over LGBT rights," said Dan Cox, the institute's research director. "At a time when Americans are more divided than ever, the sea change in support for LGBT rights that now crosses lines of race, ethnicity, religion and geography means that LGBT rights are becoming one of the few areas of public agreement."

The main holdouts remain conservative Republicans. While a majority of all Republicans now support same-sex marriage — 51 percent — only 36 percent of conservative Republi-

cans agree, according to the survey.

Perhaps not surprisingly, only two groups significantly aligned with conservative Republicanism statistically — Mormons and white evangelicals — continue to support allowing merchants to refuse to provide goods and services to same-sex couples, both at 53 percent. Black Protestants, by contrast, oppose refusing such service by almost two-thirds, the institute reported.

Opposition to refusing services spans the country, with residents of only three states falling below a majority: North Dakota and South Dakota (both at 49 percent) and Utah (48 percent).

By comparison, 60 percent of Americans overall oppose withholding service.

"While religious liberty is a widely held value, most believe that small businesses that are open to the public should serve all customers and that personal religious objections of the owners should not be allowable grounds for refusing service to gay and lesbian customers," said the institute's chief executive, Robert P. Jones, co-chairman of religion and politics for the American Academy of Religion.

Majorities of white evangelicals and Mormons may remain opposed to refusing service, Jones said, but "combined, they represent less than 1 in 5 Americans today."

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/support-same-sex-marriage-grows-sharply-u-s-survey-finds-n870586>

We often hear about how we need to be more tolerant to make room for people, ideas and actions with which we may not agree. This is a prerequisite for a functional democracy. But tolerance alone is not sufficient; it allows us to accept others without engaging with them, to feel smug and self-satisfied without challenging the boundaries within which too many of us live. A society worthy of our ideals would be a much more inclusive one, a more integration. It would be a place where we continually strive to create a better whole out of our many separate parts. This is a sentiment that itself stretches back to our founding. Our first national motto was *E pluribus unum*, "From many, one." From many states, we are one nation. And from many peoples, we should be one society. Under this framework, building tolerance is a worthy way station to a much grander destination of inclusion. This is a journey that is in our power as a nation to make. I know this to be true, because a journey from intolerance to tolerance to inclusion is one that many have made, myself included.

--- Dan Rather,
What Unites Us: Reflections on Patriotism,
by Dan Rather & Elliot Kirschner.

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Using chosen names reduces odds of depression and suicide in transgender youths

March 30, 2018

AUSTIN, Texas – In one of the largest and most diverse studies of transgender youths to date, researchers led by a team at The University of Texas at Austin have found that when transgender youths are allowed to use their chosen name in places such as work, school and at home, their risk of depression and suicide drops.

“Many kids who are transgender have chosen a name that is different than the one that they were given at birth,” said author [Stephen T. Russell](#), professor and chair of human development and family science. “We showed that the more contexts or settings where they were able to use their preferred name, the stronger their mental health was.”

The study in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* was published this week in advance of Saturday’s annual Transgender Day of Visibility.

Researchers interviewed transgender youths ages 15 to 21 and asked whether young people could use their chosen name at school, home, work and with friends. Compared with peers who could not use their chosen name in any context, young people who could use their name in all four areas experienced 71 percent fewer symptoms of severe depression, a 34 percent decrease in reported thoughts of suicide and a 65 percent decrease in suicidal attempts.

[Earlier research](#) by Russell found that transgender youths report having suicidal thoughts at nearly twice the rate of their peers, with about 1 out of 3 transgender youths reporting considering suicide. In the new study, having even one context in which a chosen name could be used was associated with a 29 percent decrease in suicidal thoughts. The researchers controlled for personal characteristics and social support.

“I’ve been doing research on LGBT youth for almost 20 years now, and even I was surprised by how clear that link was,” Russell said.

The study interviewed 129 youths in three U.S. cities, one each in the Northeast, the Southwest and the West Coast. Transgender youths are estimated to be only about 1 percent of the population and are difficult to reach, so the research team worked with community organizations serving LGBT youths and other venues to reach as diverse a population of transgender youths as possible, Russell said. He calls the sample “remarkably ethnically and geographically diverse and diverse in terms of social class.”

Because many names are common to one gender, allowing transgender youths to use a chosen name is one simple step that institutions such as schools, hospitals, financial institutions, workplaces and community organizations can use to help young people affirm their gender identity, Russell said.

“It’s practical to support young people in using the name that they choose,” Russell said. “It’s respectful and developmentally appropriate.”

Amanda M. Pollitt, also of The University of Texas; Gu Li of the University of British Columbia; and Arnold H. Grossman of New York University were also authors of the paper.

The research was funded by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health and supported by the UT Population

Research Center and a grant from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

For more information, contact: [Esther Robards-Forbes](#), College of Natural Sciences, 512-232-0654.

<https://news.utexas.edu/2018/03/30/name-use-matters-for-transgender-youths-mental-health>

After transgender inmate was raped, beaten, Texas agrees to clarify LGBT prisoner policies

By Lauren McGaughy, Texas Government Reporter

AUSTIN — Texas will clarify its policies regarding the treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender inmates as the result of a settlement with a former prisoner.

Passion Star, a transgender woman housed in men’s prisons, filed a civil rights complaint in 2014 alleging she was repeatedly brutalized during her time behind bars. Star said she asked to be housed separately for a decade before Texas prison officials put her in safekeeping.

The state of Texas and Star recently reached a settlement that was “agreeable to all parties,” [the LGBT law group Lambda Legal announced Wednesday](#).

“For years, I was raped and beaten in prison and when I asked for help I was ignored,” said Star, who was released last year. “I was hurt, scared and thrown in solitary in hopes that I would be forgotten, but today I can be proud that I never gave up.”

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice was and is in full compliance with federal law, and any changes to LGBT inmate policies were in the works before the settlement, an agency spokesman said. He added that the American Correctional Association has awarded the state for its prison standards.

“TDCJ did modify policy to provide further clarity that our practices and policy are officially in compliance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act [PREA],” spokesman Jeremy Desel said. “They are changes that were already underway.”

The state has two years to retrain staff on the changes, he added.

Advocates provided more details about its terms.

“The first one is improvement to the intake process to help ensure that vulnerable people like LGBT people are identified and steps can be taken early in the process to protect them,” said Lambda Legal’s transgender project attorney, Demoya Gordon. “The new policies also, hopefully, will make it such that TDCJ does a better job of getting vulnerable people into safekeeping where they are separated from people who may seek to abuse them” while still having access to full services.

Star will also receive an undisclosed amount of money as a result of the settlement. Gordon said Star hopes to use that “to launch this phase of her life.” Now 34, Star was charged with aggravated kidnapping when she was 18 after she and her then-boyfriend made off with a car with the salesman still inside. They let the salesman out after about 40 miles. Both accepted a 20-year plea deal.

During her time in prison, Star said, she was sexually

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For this young LGBT man, the DACA fight means coming out of two closets

By Jenny Manrique, March 5, 2018

Francisco Bautista's birth certificate from his native Mexico has an ambiguous 'X' marked in the middle of the two boxes that identify his gender. Right in the middle. No male nor female.

"How do they know? The universe is so funny," said the 26-year-old. Franky, as he calls himself, identifies as a gender fluid person. He has a feminine look — women's shoes and a blouse — and switches from English to Spanish when ordering *panqueques* and *jugo de naranja*, pancakes and orange juice, at a Denny's in Oak Lawn.

Being different, Franky faced hopelessness, fear and shame as he struggled with his identity. Those challenging years have been followed by optimism, confidence and joy as he's learned to accept who he is.

But Franky lives in two worlds. He's one of a small group of LGBT people who grew up as unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. He is a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals recipient. Now that safety net allowing many children of immigrants to stay in the U.S. may be taken away. Where once it was hard for him to come out in the macho culture he was raised in, now he is struggling with his feeling of belonging here, and his uncertainty over whether he will ever be accepted as an American.

When President Donald Trump announced the end of the Obama administration's program to shield some children of unauthorized immigrants from deportation, it was "one of the saddest days of my life."

"DACA gave me some hope," he said. "I thought I was never going to be able to grow up until I could start working and providing for myself."

Now Franky feels lost in the tug-of-war between saving DACA and Trump's demand for a border wall in exchange. "I just see we are political toys," he said. "I don't want to keep my life on hold."

The Williams Institute, which researches sexual orientation and gender identity issues out of the University of California at Los Angeles, estimates that about 36,000 LGBT people are beneficiaries of DACA. The Center for American Progress, a left-leaning think tank, estimates that 267,000 immigrants who identify as members of the LGBT community are unauthorized.

"DACA has helped this community to come out of two closets," said Sharita Gruberg, associate director of the CAP LGBT Research and Communications Project. "A community that has been historically invisible because of its immigration status and sexual orientation. For many, DACA gave them the first form of visibility and identification."

As with all DACA recipients, Deferred Action has meant for Franky the possibility of financial stability, access to schools and jobs and, of course, not being deported. But LGBT youths are at additional risk of returning to countries about which they know very little and where gender discrimination and violence against gays and transgender people can be a serious problem.

Sasha Moreno, an immigration attorney who has represented transgender people looking for asylum in the U.S., said she's constantly quoting reports to immigration judges about harassment and torture against the LGBT community in countries such as Guatemala, Mexico and El Salvador to high-

light the dangers of deporting these kids.

"Mexico has a good amount of LGBT-friendly laws, but it also has the second-highest rate of [transgender woman deaths](#) in the world," Moreno said.

Moreno noted that because DACA recipients entered the U.S. many years ago, and because the bar to qualify for asylum is within one year of arrival, they can't apply for asylum based on threat of persecution.

<https://www.dallasnews.com/news/immigration/2018/03/05/young-lgbt-man-daca-fight-means-coming-two-closets>

Former Miss America from Alabama marries girlfriend, warming hearts all around

By Lisa Gutierrez, April 16, 2018

Miss America 2005, Deidre Downs Gunn, an obstetrician-gynecologist in Alabama, married attorney Abbott Jones in front of 200 guests over the weekend.

The two women marked their Southern-themed wedding celebration using the hashtag "DrandMrsAmerica," according to [People](#), which reported exclusively on the wedding.

The ceremony took place at the Birmingham Museum of Art. Downs Gunn's 8-year-old son gave away his mother and served as her best man.

Their wedding comes two years after Miss Missouri, Erin O'Flaherty, broke ground by [becoming the first openly gay woman](#) to compete in the Miss America pageant.

For the rest of the story: <http://www.kansascity.com/news/nation-world/article208986914.html>

(Continued from page 3)

assaulted and beaten up by inmates and alleges that prison staff told her to "fight" or to stop "acting gay" if she did not want to be raped. Studies show LGBT inmates [are far more likely](#) to be the targets of violence and rape than the average inmate in the general prison population.

As of September, there were 573 inmates who self-identified as transgender in Texas prisons, according to TDCJ. [This number represents an eightfold increase](#) from three years earlier, when the department first began asking inmates about their gender identities during intake.

In 2015, [TDCJ expanded transgender inmates' access to hormone therapy](#). Transgender inmates in state prisons in Texas are housed according to their sex at birth. [This policy is different in federal prisons](#), where trans inmates can petition to be moved to a prison that conforms with their gender identity. [The Trump administration has indicated that may change soon](#).

Gordon called the Star settlement a small step toward better treatment for LGBT people behind bars, and thus better conditions for all Texas inmates.

"What we've been able to achieve in this case, and what Passion has been able to achieve, by fighting back and speaking out, is really significant," she said. "It's a civil rights issue. It's an LGBT rights issue. It's a human rights issue."

<https://www.dallasnews.com/news/lgbt/2018/03/15/after-transgender-inmate-raped-beaten-texas-agrees-clarify-lgbt-prisoner-policies>

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★ at 6:30 pm on the third Tuesday of the ★

★ month at Shaw's Patio Bar & Grill, 1051 W ★

★ Magnolia Ave, Fort Worth, TX 76104. ★

★ The next event will be on May 15. ★

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transgender people from military service and promoting exemptions that could enable businesses, health care providers and others to refuse to accommodate LGBT people based on their religious beliefs.

Later this year, perhaps in June, a potentially momentous ruling is expected from the U.S. Supreme Court on whether businesses that serve the public can cite religious objections to refuse service to LGBT people, even in states that protect them in their nondiscrimination laws. The case involves a Colorado baker who did not want to make a cake for a same-sex couple to celebrate their wedding.

Some conservatives suggest legislative leaders are treading softly on these issues now for fear of provoking big corporations and pro sports leagues that support LGBT rights.

“The left is leveraging the cultural and economic power of big businesses like Amazon and Apple to force smaller businesses and nonprofits that hold traditional views on marriage to shut down,” contends attorney Emilie Kao, a religious freedom expert with the conservative Heritage Foundation.

“A lot of people feel they’re being bullied into silence, and the big businesses are all on the side of this new sexual orthodoxy,” Kao added. “For social conservatives, it feels very much like David and Goliath.”...

An ever-growing number of states — at least a dozen — have passed bills banning the practice of “gay conversion therapy” on minors. And voters in Anchorage, Alaska, rejected a ballot measure that would have restricted transgender people’s access to public restrooms.


For the rest of the story: <https://apnews.com/627d0ed9297848769d2f35a2892f3972>

Extra On the Web:


LGBTQ+ Adventurers Are All About Getting Out in the Woods

The push for diversity and respect in the outdoors must include LGBTQ+

<https://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/2018-2-march-april/feature/lgbtq-adventurers-venture-out-woods>



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