

Transgender and Nonbinary Dignity and Rights Under Attack

People of transgender and nonbinary experience are beloved by God and are among the neighbors Jesus commanded his followers to love and treat with worth and dignity that human judgment cannot set aside.

Religion is being used in our country to attack women's reproductive rights. Political forces are positioned to use religion and state-by-state strategies to eliminate marriage equality. All rights, including voting and equality before the law, are at risk, White supremacy entwines with a litany of issues to block people on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

At this moment faith leaders need to speak out to support people of transgender and nonbinary experience and against discrimination and the loss of their rights. More than 30 states have considered laws to ban health care, participation in sports, and utilization of gender-appropriate bathrooms for trans people. Seven states have already passed such laws.

Anti-trans political forces are trying to criminalize families and doctors as they work to address the trauma of being assigned a gender at birth that is incongruous with the child's or adult's actual gender identity. Children are being targeted by banning them from sports teams that match their gender. These attacks not only impact trans and nonbinary children and youth, but adults and seniors, as well, and are drivers of crimes against trans and nonbinary people that continue to escalate. These actions threaten the safety and well-being of the whole community.

How to Use Talking Points

Talking points are for use in general conversation, panel presentations, interviews, church legislative bodies, and other settings of engagement on the issues. In formal interviews, you will want to include one or more reasons listeners should believe you.

Your credentials include your personal experience, faith story, education, or even being an interested person.

- "As a pastor of 24 years, I have met with several families whose child was transgender...."

Next use the relevant talking points.

- Decisions about gender-affirming medical care must be made between a provider, patient, and the patient's parents or guardians.
- Criminalizing parents or doctors simply adds more trauma to already vulnerable children.

Close your interview/conversation with a call to action. If you are on camera or on stage, look directly at the camera or the people you are trying to inspire.

- If you care about families, please call or write your political leaders and urge them not to use trans and nonbinary gender young people, and their families as leverage for elections.

Talking Points

Children and Families:

- Children usually become aware of their gender identity early in life.
- A child who says they want to change their gender needs to be taken seriously.
- A lack of alignment between gender assignment at birth and one's identity can create significant distress and can be felt in children as young as 2 years old.
- The distress experienced from gender-non alignment is "gender dysphoria" according to the The American Psychiatric DSM
- Gender dysphoria is a serious medical condition that, if left untreated, can result in severe anxiety and depression, self-harm, and suicidality.
- When appropriately treated, gender dysphoria is easily managed by following appropriate treatment protocols to affirm gender identity and alleviate distress.
- The American Psychological Association (APA) cites research that shows that even children who explore their gender and eventually become cisgender, are healthier if they have the freedom to have hormone treatment to delay puberty.
- Decisions about gender-affirming medical care must be made between a provider, patient, and the patient's parents or guardians.
- Criminalizing parents or doctors simply adds more trauma to already vulnerable children.

Transgender and Nonbinary Athletes:

- Excluding women who are trans from participating in sports invites gender policing that could subject any woman to accusations of being 'too masculine' or 'too good' at their sport to be a 'real' woman.
- In one study, 22% of trans women in school were harassed so badly they had to leave school;10% were kicked out. Trans women and girls have far more challenges than advantages in all aspects of their lives. School sports can be a place of acceptance.
- Dr. Deanna Adkins, of Duke states, "...it can be extremely harmful for a transgender young person to be excluded from a team consistent with their gender identity."
- Recently, the NCAA published updated [rules](#) for transgender athletes and concluded that, as in Olympic sports, testosterone levels can be measured and such testing is in keeping with both the value of full inclusion and the value of fair competition.

The Equality Act:

The Equality Act prohibits discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity in areas including public accommodations and facilities, education, federal funding, employment, housing, credit, and the jury system. It expands the definition of public accommodations and allows the Department of Justice to intervene in equal protection actions on account of sexual orientation or gender identity. Passage of this bill would mean that individuals could not be barred from school teams, restrooms or locker rooms that match the individual's gender identity.

- In a country where transgender people have no protections while they face massive discrimination and attacks, civil rights must be spelled out and protected.
- A gay couple can marry on Monday and be fired on Tuesday, we need the Equality Act to include LGBTQ+ people in current civil rights laws.
- Politicians are trying to prove they are conservative by targeting transgender children, their parents and their doctors. Families and children are frightened because there is no federal law to protect them.
- In 30 states, political forces want to harass transgender people and same-sex couples by making it legal to discriminate in housing, health care, employment, and more
- Civil rights should never be up to state law. No one should have to move to another state to get housing, jobs, health care, or protection in school. We need a federal law
- Some two-thirds of LGBTQ+ people in this country report having experienced discrimination and cannot go to court because we haven't passed the Equality Act
- The majority of both Democrats and Republicans support passing these protections,
- The Equality Act was introduced with unprecedented support from hundreds of lawmakers, leading corporations, and more than 200 national and state groups.
- Every person in every state deserves a fair chance to earn a living, provide for their family, and live free from the fear or fact of harassment or discrimination.

Faith Leader and Person of Faith:

Peterson Toscano uses biblical expertise to dramatize gender nonconformity in the Bible. Deborah was a warrior, Joseph's robe was more like a dress, and Jesus lifted up eunuchs in more than one case. Notably, the Ethiopian eunuch is a central figure in Acts 8.

- The main message in the Bible is love.
- Paul urges us to go beyond gender in Galatians 3:28. "...there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."
- Paul challenged the requirement of circumcision which was driven by gender, religion, and culture. It was dropped, and the community of believers became more inclusive.
- Jesus said that some people are born eunuchs, others are made eunuchs, and some become eunuchs for the kingdom of God. In effect, a model for devotion. (Matt. 19:12)

- The Holy Spirit urged the early church to welcome gender nonconformity when the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized in Acts, chapter 8.
- Psalm 139:13-14 talks about God knowing us in the womb and is a much-misused text. God loving us in the womb is not about gender, it is about God's love for us.

School and Public Policy:

Whether student, parent, teacher, administrator, or school board member, you are not alone! Prepare yourself to engage your community on this journey. If you find yourself or your allies challenged by terms like "cis-gender" and by using new forms of pronouns, remember that trans and nonbinary people's well-being and even their lives are at stake. If you find yourself needing legal help, Lambda Legal has detailed legal guidance.

Public policy is increasingly being leveraged by far right groups. Proposed laws against trans youth and their families are multiplying. In 2021, thirty anti-trans bills were proposed at the state level and seven states passed these devastating laws. The laws range from prohibiting participating in sports, accessing health care, and even calling parents who are helping their children access health care "abusers." In the first weeks of 2022, more bills were proposed. Nine states have already passed such legislation. Be ready to take a stand.

- A GLSEN survey shows that more than 80% of "gender expansive" students have been harassed and a third feel unsafe in classrooms. If they are also people of color, 80% have experienced racism.
- A Harvard survey of 3,700 teens showed that it is trans youth who are at risk of assault in schools.
- All young people want to feel safe and comfortable using the restroom and participating in normal school activities.
- Trans young people should not be required to use private bathrooms at school. It can make them targets and sets the school up for sponsoring exclusion.
- When a child or youth knows their gender and needs health care to match their body with their identity it should not be denied.
- The Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law, survey revealed that transgender students are four times more likely to be victimized than cis-gendered people.

Sources/Resources:

APA Gender Health Care: <https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/policy/issues/gender-affirmative-care>

APA on “Criminalizing Gender Affirming Care for Minors” <https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/policy/issues/gender-affirmative-care>

Pre-teens and Gender Diversity https://raisingchildren.net.au/Supporting_yourchild

ACLU Hecox V Little - <https://www.aclu.org/legal-document/hecox-v-little-adkins-declaration>

PFLAG <https://pflag.org/sites/default/files/EqualityAct2019TPsPFLAGNational.pdf>

John Hopkins Medical: https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/tips-for-parents-of-lgbtq-youth?_ga=2.10534964.1809175083.1652197312-1813003634.1652197312

ACLU Trans Myths: <https://www.aclu.org/news/lgbtq-rights/four-myths-about-trans-athletes-debunked>

2015 Trans Survey: <https://www.ustranssurvey.org/reports#USTS>

NCAA Rules <https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2022/1/27/transgender-participation-policy.aspx>

Peterson Toscano’s web site: <https://petersontoscano.com/>

Watch **Transfigurations** for \$3 on Amazon:
<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0723BCT4F?linkCode=ogi&th=1&psc=1&tag=sofferscom1-20>

Access the free **Transfigurations** Study Guide: <https://petersontoscano.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/transfigurationsstudyguide2.pdf>

HRC (Human Rights Campaign) <https://www.hrc.org/resources/what-does-the-bible-say-about-transgender-people>

Chicago Public Schools: <https://www.cps.edu/globalassets/cps-pages/services-and-supports/health-and-wellness/healthy-cps/healthy-environment/lgbtq-supportive-environments/supportinggenderdiversitytoolkit2.pdf>

HRC <https://www.hrc.org/resources/schools-in-transition-a-guide-for-supporting-transgender-students-in-k-12-s>

GLSEN https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/Separation_and_Stigma_2017.pdf

NCTE Transgender Students and bathrooms FAQ
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5fce90e1799940555acbc8f3/t/606f1644032c8f367f94222d/1617892932900/NCTEBathroomFAQs19.pdf>

APA (American Psychological Association) <https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/policy/issues/transgender-exclusion-sports>

NBC <https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/out-politics-and-policy/least-7-states-proposed-anti-trans-bills-first-week-2022-rcna11205>

LGBT MAPS <https://www.lgbtmap.org/file/talking-about-transgender-people-and-restrooms.pdf>

Lambda Legal <https://www.lambdalegal.org/publications/trans-toolkit>

Lambda Legal <https://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights>

Harvard <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/transgender-teens-restricted-bathroom-access-sexual-assault/>