

Overcoming Challenges Anywhere

Understanding the Strategy of Extremist Anti-Trans Policy in Florida and Beyond

The 2024 legislative session in Florida proved that pushing anti-LGBTQ+ legislation is not a winning strategy. We deserve politicians who prioritize our actual needs, instead of focusing on ideological battles they can't win. Our partners and allies have met this moment by showing up stronger than ever to be a part of the political process and helping to dismantle the work of extremist politicians and their culture wars in Florida and beyond. We couldn't be prouder.

21 out of the 22 anti-LGBTQ+ bills introduced in Florida this session did not pass or were changed to exclude harmful provisions due to the pressure of advocates on the ground. Equality Florida was in the Capitol building every day, demonstrating how this legislation is harmful to Floridians, with the full force of Keshet's Jewish community behind them. Ultimately, it was clear that public opinion is pro-equality, and our cause prevailed.

2024 Florida Legislative Session Bill Types and Strategy

1

Repealing Nondiscrimination Protections

These bills repeal or ban local governments from adopting nondiscrimination policies. They do not align with public polling on nondiscrimination protections. 76% of Americans support nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ people, and within the American Jewish population the number is 86% of people (the highest out of every major religion) ([PRRI 2023](#)). These laws and their advocates attempt to make it easier to target LGBTQ+ people in the workplace and discriminate without risk of legal recourse, thereby normalizing hate toward our community.

2

"Don't Say Gay or Trans at Work"

This type of bill attempts to expand the 2022 "Don't Say Gay" law* to the workplace, not just to regulate pronouns. It also proposed to give the government significant control over charities, businesses, and service organizations. It threatened to cut off state contracts for any business that didn't agree with the extreme idea that transgender people don't exist. We know that LGBTQ+ people always have and always will be here. This dangerous strategy of attempting to erase our visible presence from public life will never successfully erase LGBTQ+ identity.

**Advocates reached an agreement with the state that will end the most harmful provisions of 2022's "Don't Say Gay" Legislation.*

3

Barriers to Accurate IDs that Affirm Transgender Identity

By mandating the use of biological sex assigned at birth in schools and government agencies, “Trans Erasure Bills” seek to marginalize transgender individuals further. This extremist agenda aims to roll back the progress made in transgender rights and equality, sparking widespread condemnation and resistance from advocates and allies. Denying trans people the ability to change the sex listed on their birth certificates, thereby erasing their legal recognition and identity, shows that extremist politicians do not have their constituents’ best interests at heart.

4

Classroom Censorship

These bills would give the state more power to control what people can say about racism, sexism, and oppression. One version of this legislation regulates the content of instruction and training in schools and workplaces. These laws make it harder for teachers to have open, honest classroom discussions about our history and how we can improve society to be more inclusive. History tells us we are on a slippery slope when public institutions are censored—it is essential to Judaism, and the rights and safety of Jews in the U.S., to protect free speech.

5

Assault on Democratic Institutions

A variety of bills pose a significant threat to democratic institutions. By ending “no excuse” mail-in voting and limiting vote-by-mail, one bill would undermine the fundamental right to participate in the electoral process conveniently and safely. Additionally, a different bill requiring a two-thirds majority for ballot initiatives would cause formidable barriers to citizens directly influencing the laws and regulations that affect their lives. Coupled with existing restrictions on voting access and ballot initiatives, these measures consolidate decision-making power away from the public, eroding the principles of democracy and civic engagement that are essential to our Jewish community and values.

Although there has certainly been damage done from their existence alone, all of the bills outlined above failed to become Florida law. Regardless, we will see copycat legislation in other states that have a similar faction of extremist politicians. May those bills face similar resistance and a similar fate.

Understanding These Bills in the Context of the Election

Stoking the flames of culture wars helps turn out voter participation in extremist factions. When voters see LGBTQ+ equality as a direct threat to their rights or the safety of their communities, they feel it to be a moral issue to oppose our civil liberties. That is why understanding the strategy of the Religious Right is important not only for defeating anti-LGBTQ+ legislation in state legislatures but also for navigating the 2024 election.

Candidates will undoubtedly use our rights as political bargaining chips in an attempt to win over these extremist factions in November. They forget what we know is true; these bills are wildly unpopular and do not represent the electorate’s values. **As people of faith, we must meet this moment with our narrative: religion and LGBTQ+ equality are not incompatible. Because of our Jewish values, we will go to the polls and vote with our consciences and clarity.**