

DECLARING DANE COUNTY A SANCTUARY FOR TRANS AND NONBINARY INDIVIDUALS

In the last few years, states have advanced a record number of bills that attack LGBTQ rights, especially transgender youth. So far in this year’s legislative session, state lawmakers across the country have introduced more than 430 bills that restrict fundamentals like health care, education and the freedom of expression for LGBTQ+ people, according to analysis from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Most bills have advanced to committee and nearly two dozen have passed into law. That overall tally is up from last year, according to the Human Rights Campaign, when 315 bills were introduced.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has tracked legislation which takes many forms, including:

- Bills that attempt to limit the ability to update gender information on IDs and records, such as birth certificates and driver’s licenses.
- Bills that attempt to undermine and weaken nondiscrimination laws by allowing employers, businesses, and hospitals to turn away LGBTQ people or refuse them equal treatment.
- Bills that restrict how and when LGBTQ people can be themselves, limiting access to books about them and trying to ban or censor performances like drag shows.
- Bills that target access to medically-necessary health care for transgender people; ban affirming care for trans youth; create criminal penalties for providing this care; and bills that block funding to medical centers that offer gender-affirming care, or block insurance coverage of health care for transgender people.
- Public accommodations bills seek to prohibit transgender people from using facilities like public bathrooms and locker rooms.
- Bills that prevent trans students from participating in school activities like sports, force teachers to out students, and censor any in-school discussions of LGBTQ people and issues.

Trans Americans are four times more likely to be victims of violent crime than their cisgender peers, according to a 2021 study. Trans youth, who have been the primary focus of anti-trans legislation this year, are experiencing a mental health crisis: A 2022 survey by the Trevor Project, a suicide prevention group focused on LGBTQ youth, found that 86 percent of trans or nonbinary youth reported negative effects on their mental health stemming from the political debate around trans issues, and nearly half had seriously considered suicide in the past year.

In this hostile environment, some cities and counties across the country are taking steps to support and protect trans and nonbinary individuals.

35 • Kansas City Missouri recently approved measures indicating the city will not prosecute
36 or fine any person or organization that seeks, provides, receives or helps someone to
37 receive gender-affirming care such as puberty blockers, hormones or surgery. The
38 resolution also says that if the state passes a law or resolution that imposes criminal or
39 civil punishments, fines or professional sanctions in such cases, personnel in the city will
40 make enforcing those requirements “their lowest priority.”

41 • In Texas, the City of Austin declared last year that it should be considered a
42 sanctuary for transgender youth and their families, and Harris County, home to
43 Houston, declared it wouldn’t pursue cases against parents over gender-affirming
44 care.

45 • California, Minnesota and Washington have declared themselves sanctuary states for
46 gender-affirming care, as have the cities of Chicago, Minneapolis and West Hollywood.

47 Dane County values its transgender and nonbinary residents and vigorously opposes measures
48 that would allow legal violence toward trans people in accessing gender-affirming care or
49 expression.

50 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Dane County Board of Supervisors firmly states
51 its commitment to protect transgender and nonbinary individuals, and believes that access to
52 health care is a fundamental right and all people in Dane County and the State of Wisconsin
53 should have access to all health care, including gender affirming care.

54 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that, if the state of Wisconsin passes a law that imposes criminal
55 or civil punishments, fines, or professional sanctions on any person or organization that seeks,
56 provides, receives or helps someone to receive gender-affirming care such as puberty blockers,
57 hormones or surgery, the Dane County Board of Supervisors urges the Sheriff to make
58 enforcement their lowest priority.

59 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Dane County be considered a safe place, a sanctuary, for
60 transgender children and adults and their families.

61 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Dane County Board of Supervisors urges all municipal
62 bodies and school boards in Dane County to join county government in support of our
63 transgender and non-binary residents by adopting similar resolutions.

64 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution be sent to Governor Tony Evers; the
65 Dane County state legislative delegation; U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin and Ron Johnson; the
66 Wisconsin Congressional delegation; all Dane County town board chairs, village presidents, and
67 city mayors; and all Dane County school board presidents.