

# **Women's Rights and Reproductive Rights, Health and Justice Organizations:**

## **Attacks on Trans Youth and Their Families Are Another Assault on Health Care, Bodily Autonomy, and Gender Equality**

*March 9, 2022*

The undersigned women's rights and reproductive rights, health, and justice organizations categorically reject Texas officials' lawless attempts to criminalize evidence-based health care for transgender youth and to threaten their families, providers, and other supportive adults. Make no mistake, these actions—and similar actions being proposed in other states—are yet another attack on Texans' fundamental liberty to make deeply personal decisions about their health care, their bodies, and their futures.

Every day, we work to ensure that all people throughout our nation have access to safe, medically appropriate, and evidenced-based care, and the ability to control their reproductive decisions and lives. We recognize the overwhelming scientific consensus that gender diversity is a natural, healthy part of human diversity. We embrace the mounting evidence that transgender youth can and often do thrive when they are accepted by their families and communities and, have access to appropriate medical care. And we join the growing chorus of Texas district attorneys rejecting a "legal opinion" from the attorney general that lacks legal foundation and offends fundamental constitutional freedoms.

Much like SB8, the Texas governor and attorney general's pronouncements attempt to enlist private individuals to report on their neighbors—here, under threat of prosecution. While legally baseless, this effort is designed to stoke fear and weaponize systems that claim to prevent and address child abuse. The threat of prosecution for parents, doctors, and teachers, and of removing children from loving homes, would be a powerful new tool for harassing, abusing, and even blackmailing transgender teens and their families. This is particularly true for Black transgender children and their families, who are already over-criminalized and over-investigated by authorities. The mere specter of losing their home and family will inflict lasting harms on young people's mental health.

We accept what every major medical association in the country has affirmed: that gender-affirming care sought by transgender youth and their families is often life-saving and medically necessary. For example, puberty blockers are essential for some young people because they delay what would otherwise be irreversible pubertal changes to their bodies. Thus, gender-affirming care preserves young people's ability to make future decisions about their bodies, their lives, and their families. Seeking to block access to medically-recommended patient-driven care is an irreversible intervention by state officials to take away those choices. Just as no person should be subjected to a forced pregnancy, a forced birth, or a forced sterilization, neither should transgender youth be subjected to a forced, unwanted form of puberty.

We know that these actions will harm youth and families in every Texas community. We also know it will fall hardest on those who already face disproportionate involvement in these systems: people who are Black, disabled, or poor. In that light, we are especially outraged by these officials' deceitful attempts to compare medically necessary care that promotes adolescents' health and preserves their

future choices with this nation’s shameful—and in some cases continuing—history of forced sterilization of people of color, disabled people, and poor people. These officials have shown little interest in addressing the actual forced sterilization of people with disabilities—which Texas has never expressly banned—or nonconsensual “normalization” procedures forced on intersex children. Nor is the claim of protecting reproductive rights credible from officials who have worked to enact draconian abortion bans, shutter family planning clinics, and limit access to contraception, all of which have had an outsized impact on Black people, Latinx people, and people of color, immigrants, low-income people, incarcerated people, young people, and people living in rural areas.

What Texas officials are trying to do, and other state officials are threatening to do, is a targeted attack on bodily autonomy, on access to health care, and on families. Decisions about what our bodies should look like, whether we’re able to have children, and when and how we do so are the most intimate, personal decisions that the state should never forcibly take away. Just as they have always done, those seeking to take away these freedoms do so by ignoring medical science and making false claims about health risks and their purported desire to protect women and children. Just as we have always done, we reject these false narratives and stand for gender equality, bodily autonomy, and better health and opportunities for all women and girls and for people of all genders and all types of bodies.

### **National organizations**

A Better Balance

Advocates for Youth

American Humanist Association

American Jewish World Service

American Medical Student Association

American Society for Reproductive Medicine

Asset Building Strategies.

Black Girls Vote

Catholics for Choice

Center for Reproductive Rights

Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

Coalition of Labor Union Women

Community Catalyst

Defend Yourself

Edutainment4Life

End Rape On Campus

Equal Rights Advocates

Families USA

Feminist Majority Foundation

Guttmacher Institute

Human Rights Campaign

If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice

In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda

interACT: Advocates for Intersex Youth

Ipas

It's On Us

Know Your IX

Legal Momentum, the Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund  
NARAL Pro-Choice America  
National Alliance to End Sexual Violence  
National Center for Youth Law  
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association  
National Health Law Program  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice  
National Organization for Women  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Women's Law Center  
New Voices for Reproductive Justice  
People For the American Way  
PFLAG National  
Physicians for Reproductive Health  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
Population Connection Action Fund  
Population Institute  
Power to Decide  
Public Counsel  
Public Justice  
Reproductive Health Access Project  
Shriver Center on Poverty Law  
SIECUS: Sex Ed for Social Change  
State Innovation Exchange (SiX)  
Stop Sexual Assault in Schools  
The Every Voice Coalition  
The Sex Workers Project of the Urban Justice Center  
Transgender Training Institute  
UCSF Bixby Center for Global Reproductive Health  
UltraViolet  
Union for Reform Judaism  
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity  
Vote Mama Foundation  
Women of Reform Judaism

**State and local organizations**

Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence  
Avow: Unapologetic Abortion Advocacy  
Bold Futures NM  
California Women's Law Center  
Catalysis LLC  
Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (CAASE)  
Clinic Access Support Network  
Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
Delaware Alliance Against Sexual Violence  
Equality California  
Equality Texas  
Frontera Fund

Fund Texas Choice  
Gender Justice  
GLSEN Oregon  
Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
Independent Women's Organization (IWO)  
Jane's Due Process  
Legal Voice  
LGBT Center of Central PA  
Lilith Fund  
Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault (LaFASA)  
Maine Women's Lobby Education Fund  
#MeToo WashU  
New Orleans NOW/Louisiana NOW  
NY Birth Control Access Project  
Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence  
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon  
Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas  
Planned Parenthood South Texas  
Planned Parenthood Texas Votes  
Saline Supports Our Community  
Silver State Equality-Nevada  
SisterLove Inc.  
SisterReach  
SPARK Reproductive Justice NOW! Inc.  
Texas Equal Access Fund (TEA Fund)  
The Women's Law Center of Maryland  
The Womxn Project  
Transgender Education Network of Texas (TENT)  
UnRestrict Minnesota  
Utah Abortion Fund  
West Fund  
Women's Law Project  
WV FREE