



EQUALITY

2023

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

INTRODUCTION

Equality Texas, the largest statewide organization solely dedicated to securing full equality for LGBTQ+ Texans, envisions a Texas where lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer Texans and their families have full equality in the hearts and minds of our fellow Texans and in all areas of the law and where every person is treated equally with dignity and respect.

TOP PRIORITIES

In 2023, our 88th Texas Legislative Session priorities are to 1) champion critical legislation that ensures LGBTQ+ Texans can visibly live, work, contribute to our communities and access crucial resources that allow us to thrive and 2) work to defeat any proposed policies that would negatively affect the lives of LGBTQ+ Texans.

We call on Texans to help us defend true Texas values like privacy, respect, safety, family and community. We will not succumb to legislation that pits us against each other or puts the lives of LGBTQ+ Texans at risk, nor will we tolerate bills that exclude our community from essential resources.

PRIVACY & LIBERTY

We oppose the intrusion of the government into private family healthcare decisions. We urge legislators to follow the lead of every major medical association in Texas and across the country and stay out of the private lives of Texans and decisions involving doctors and their patients. All health care professionals should be allowed to provide patient-centered care that improves the healthcare outcomes of their patients without interference from politicians.

DIGNITY

We firmly stand against bills that devalue the humanity and existence of transgender Texans, including bills that place highly invasive gender “tests” to participate in everyday tasks whether by having to “prove” one’s gender to go to the restroom, be on a sports team, or participate in other parts of day to day life. Gender is an individual characteristic with which people move through the world—not something that can be regulated by the government.

HEALTHCARE ACCESSIBILITY

We stand opposed to healthcare bans that limit access to life-saving healthcare for transgender youth in opposition to best-practice medical standards of care.



RESPECT & SAFETY

We recognize living in a pluralistic society, where people have variant beliefs and values, means balancing the autonomy of individuals with collective safety. We oppose bills that jeopardize safety by allowing individuals to undermine nondiscrimination policies that promote inclusion and respect.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

We oppose license to discriminate bills that allow people to violate nondiscrimination policies because of their individual beliefs.

WORKPLACE INCLUSION

We commit to working against efforts to eliminate inclusion that allow individuals to sue private companies on the basis of their diversity programs.

FAMILY & COMMUNITY

All loving Texas families deserve to be respected and allowed to live their lives without government overreach. We oppose bills that use the force of government to threaten to take children away from their loving parents and put them in an overburdened foster care system where children are at risk and LGBTQ youth are over-represented. Families should never be broken apart by the government for loving and taking care of their children through providing best-practice, life-saving health care.

We oppose bills that erase LGBTQ+ kids from the classroom, dismantle Texas communities by imposing limits on discussion of certain identities, and target whole populations and families as “inappropriate.”

SUPPORTIVE CLASSROOMS

Education censorship bills or ‘Don’t say Gay/Trans’ bills that do not respect every family or protect every student by turning an identity into a banned topic.

ESTABLISHED RIGHTS

Bills that undermine U.S. Supreme Court precedents in civil rights, such as the right to marriage equality or private relationships.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY SPACES

Policing small-businesses that provide family friendly entertainment.



We are LGBTQ+ Texans. We are neighbors, teachers, faith leaders, employees, youth, and more. We are part of the fabric of this state and deserve the same access to privacy, respect, safety, and community as our fellow Texans.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

We support legislation that promotes equality by expanding opportunity for all, helping youth thrive, supporting Texas families, and keeping Texans safe.

Expanding Opportunity for All

- Support statewide comprehensive nondiscrimination protections for sexual orientation and gender identity. Comprehensive including, but not limited to, employment, housing and public accommodations
- Eliminate barriers for transgender Texans through simplifying and streamlining the process of updating gender markers and names on identity documents such as drivers' licenses and state IDs

Helping Youth Thrive

- Eliminate harmful practices targeting LGBTQ+ youth, including "conversion therapy"
- Validate the existence of LGBTQ+ teen relationships by updating Texas "Romeo & Juliet" laws to include LGBTQ+-inclusive language
- Affirm LGBTQ+ youth in Texas public schools by removing harmful anti-LGBTQ+ language from the Texas Education Code
- Increase opportunity for homeless youth, 50% of whom identify as LGBTQ+, through increasing access to resources, such as a free ID, which can help obtain employment and housing assistance

Supporting Texas Families

- Recognize and affirm all Texas families by updating the Texas Family Code to recognize LGBTQ+ relationships, including eliminating the unconstitutional ban on sodomy and acknowledging marriage equality
- Ensure that all Texas seniors are treated with dignity and respect through updating elder rights protections to include sexual orientation and gender identity
- Ensure that all Texas families can provide a loving home for children in need through requiring publicly funded adoption agencies to accept all qualified applicants

Keeping Texans Safe

- Eliminate the ability to use sexual orientation or gender identity as an excuse for violent action – eliminate the gay/trans panic legal defense
- Protect vulnerable Texans by updating the James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Act to include gender identity. In 2019, Texas was tied for the most fatal anti-transgender violence in the nation

Holding the Line

- Oppose any attempts to "roll back" current progress towards full equality such as state preemption of local nondiscrimination ordinances or religious exemptions to generally applied laws
- Oppose any legislation that would be discriminatory or otherwise damaging to LGBTQ+ Texans or that would jeopardize Texas' reputation as a "business-friendly" or "travel/tourism-friendly" destination