

Protecting Trans Rights



MN NOW Annual
Conference

April 5, 2025

GENDER
JUSTICE

Introductions

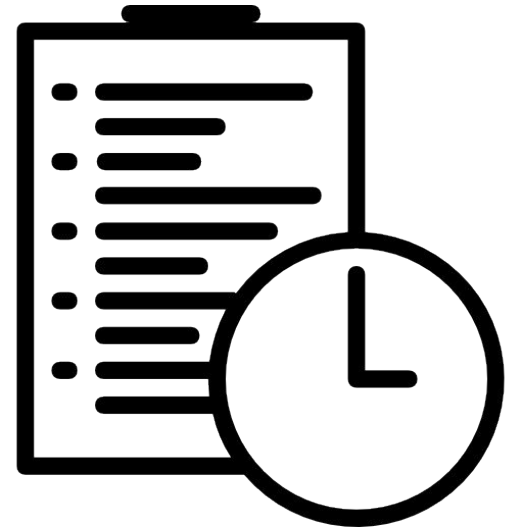


Monica Meyer (she/they)

Monica has been leading organizing, activism, fundraising and policy advocacy on behalf of issues of equity and justice since 1992.

Agenda

- Reviewing terms & definitions
- Trans equity and our current political reality
- How to discuss and support trans equity
- Minnesota Equal Rights Amendment
- Take action



MISSION STATEMENT

Gender Justice is a nonprofit legal and policy advocacy organization dedicated to advancing gender equity through the law.

VISION STATEMENT

We envision a world where **all people can thrive** regardless of their gender, gender expression, and sexual orientation. This involves **dismantling legal, structural, and cultural barriers** that contribute to gender-based oppression and ensure people of all genders a right to bodily autonomy, safety, health, and opportunity.



Terms and Definitions

Gender Identity: The term “gender identity”—distinct from the term “sexual orientation”—refers to a person’s **innate, deeply felt psychological identification** of gender, which may or may not correspond to the person’s sex assigned at birth.

Gender Expression: Gender expression refers to **external characteristics and behaviors** that are socially defined as masculine or feminine, such as dress, grooming, mannerisms, speech patterns, and social interactions. Social or cultural norms can vary widely and some characteristics that may be accepted as masculine, feminine, or expansive/neutral in one culture may not be assessed similarly in another.



Terms and Definitions



Transgender: An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.

Gender Non-Conforming, Genderqueer, Gender Expansive and Non-Binary:

Terms used to describe people whose gender expression and identity fall outside of the binary categories of masculinity/femininity and man/woman.

Terms and Definitions

Cisgender: A term used to describe people who are not transgender, because they identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. “**Cis**” is a Latin prefix meaning “on the same side as.” It is used in chemistry and other sciences like Geography, for example: transAtlantic vs cisAtlantic

Intersex: Intersex is an umbrella term for people who are born with one or more traits in their chromosomes, genitals, hormones, or internal reproductive organs. Some intersex traits are identified at birth, while others may not be discovered until puberty or later in life.

Pronouns

Using pronouns respectfully avoids gender assumptions and fosters inclusivity. Share your pronouns, ask others for theirs, and embrace using they/them to create a welcoming, compassionate space.

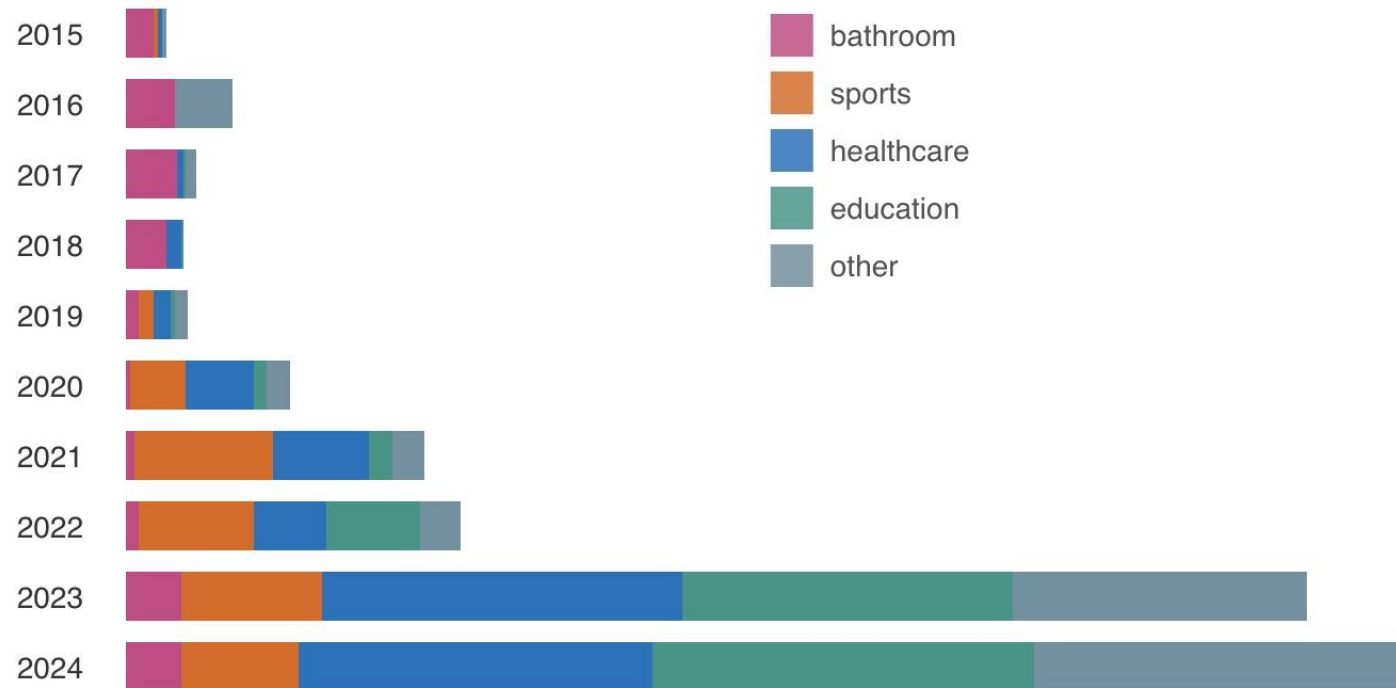


Anti-Trans Laws

Tracking the rise of anti-trans bills in the U.S.

The United States has experienced a long rise in anti-trans legislation. Now it's surging.

Bills are being written and passed in multiple states with increasing frequency



Why the attacks on trans rights?

“We knew we needed to find an issue that the candidates were comfortable talking about,” [said Terry Schilling](#), the president of American Principles Project, a social conservative advocacy group. **“And we threw everything at the wall.”**

“How a Campaign Against Transgender Rights Mobilized Conservatives,”
The New York Times, April 16, 2023



Republicans Spent Nearly \$215M on TV Ads Attacking Trans Rights This Election

“That's \$134 per trans person in anti-trans ad spending,” civil rights attorney Alejandra Caraballo said.

By Zane McNeill, TRUTHOUT

November 5, 2024



How targeting trans people for discrimination advances White Christian Nationalism

White Christian Nationalism Seeks to Enforce a Narrow, Rigid View of Gender

- White Christian nationalism promotes a worldview where rigid, binary gender roles are seen as divinely mandated and non-negotiable.
- Trans people challenge this framework by asserting their right to bodily autonomy , making them a direct target for white Christian nationalist movements.

Attacks on Trans Rights Are Part of a Larger Authoritarian Agenda

- The same forces pushing anti-trans policies are also attacking reproductive rights, racial justice, and democracy itself.
- White Christian nationalism relies on state control over personal freedoms—dictating who can marry, who can parent, and who can exist safely in public spaces.

How targeting trans people for discrimination advances White Christian Nationalism

Anti-Trans Policies Are Rooted in Religious Extremism, Not Science

- White Christian nationalist rhetoric fuels policies that ignore medical consensus on gender-affirming care.
- These policies are not about protecting children or fairness; they are about enforcing religious dogma through law.

Racial and Gender Oppression Are Interconnected

- White Christian nationalism seeks to preserve a social hierarchy where white, cisgender men hold power.
- The same ideology that justifies attacks on trans people also fuels racist voter suppression, book bans, and attacks on reproductive freedom.

2025 - Federal Politics



Attacks on Inclusion in Sports

The real threat to women's sports? It's not trans athletes.

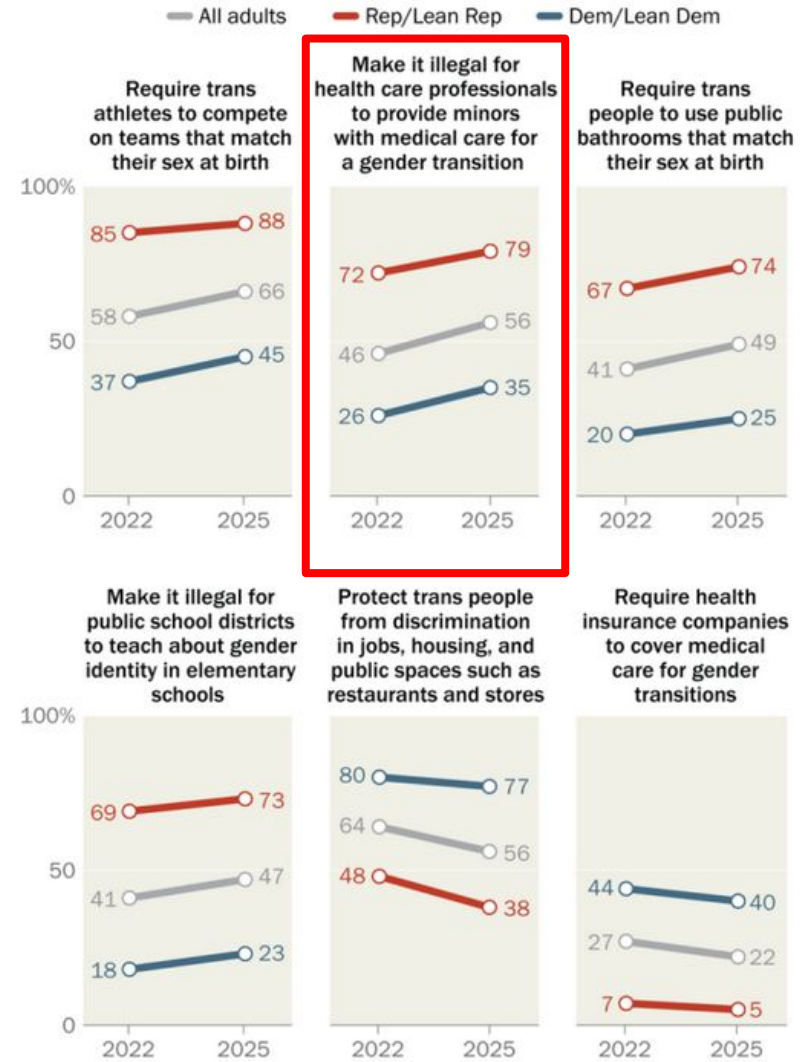
There are real problems facing women and girls sports

- Inequitable resources and pay for athletes
- Sexual violence and abuses of power
- Dismantling of federal support for girls and women's sports

Read this op ed for tips on how to counter efforts to discriminate against trans people in sports: <https://www.genderjustice.us/commentary/trans-athletes-are-not-the-real-threat/>

Americans' views of laws and policies related to transgender people have changed in recent years

% saying they would favor/strongly favor laws or policies that ...



Note: Other response options included "Oppose," "Strongly oppose" and "Neither favor nor oppose." Refer to topline for full wording of each item.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 10-17, 2025.

Our Laws in Minnesota

Legislative Protections:

- Minnesota Human Rights Act
- Minnesota Safe and Supportive Schools Act
- Ban on Conversion Therapy
- Trans Refugee State
- Insurance coverage for gender affirming care

Other Policy Protections:

Minnesota State High School League Policy
Attorney General Keith Ellison

Court Wins :

Rumble Case (Section 1557 of the ACA) cover trans folks

Tovar Case – Health insurers cannot discriminate in the coverage that they provide

Lusk Case – Department of Corrections (DOC is going to give each inmate a consultant for their gender affirming care)

NH v. Anoka Hennepin – Schools cannot segregate trans students and schools have to permit student to use the bathroom and locker rooms that align with their gender identity

Cooper Case (USA Powerlifting cannot discriminate against trans athletes)



Proposed Minnesota ERA Ballot Language

Title: The Minnesota Equal Rights Amendment

Ballot Question:

Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to say that all persons shall be guaranteed equal rights under the laws of the state, and that the state shall not discriminate against any person on account of race, color, national origin, ancestry, disability, or sex, including pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, reproductive freedom, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation?

Proposed Minnesota ERA

All persons shall be guaranteed equal rights under the laws of this state. The state shall not discriminate against any person in **intent or effect** on account of one or more of the following:

- (a) Race;
- (b) Color;
- (c) National origin;
- (d) Ancestry;
- (e) Disability; or
- (f) Sex, including but not limited to:
 - (i) Pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive freedom
 - (ii) Gender identity or gender expression
 - (iii) Sexual orientation

Any action by the state that denies an individual's equal rights shall be invalid unless, at a minimum, it is the least restrictive means of achieving a compelling governmental interest.

Why This Specific Language

Disparate Impact

The proposed MN ERA would require lawmakers to look past the question of facial classifications, and instead consider the impacts of the laws they pass on perpetuating, exacerbating, or mitigating disparities in the state of Minnesota.

Strict Scrutiny

Currently in MN discrimination based on religion and race, as well as abortion rights, are subject to strict scrutiny. Other states apply strict scrutiny to all forms of sex discrimination, disability discrimination, as well as color, national origin, and ancestry discrimination. We'd like to see that in MN.

Reproductive Freedom

Pennsylvania's ERA, though a landmark achievement, lacked explicit reproductive freedom protections, requiring decades of legal battles to secure partial recognition. Through our research, and advice from colleagues in other states, like New York, it is critical to be explicit about reproductive freedom.

Gender Identity & Expression

Explicitly including "gender expression" protects all individuals—transgender and cisgender—from discrimination based on non-conformity to gender norms. Since gender identity applies to everyone, explicit language ensures comprehensive protection for all gender identities against discrimination and sex stereotyping.

How to talk about trans equity



Trans People are People.



Lead with Shared Values: Individual Freedom and Self Determination



Personalize When Possible



Be Clear and Confident!



Talking Points - SF473/HF501

Why We Need the Minnesota ERA

The ERA would guarantee equal rights under Minnesota law for *everyone* – leaving no one out. Here are a few examples of how it will make a real difference:

- **Protects Reproductive Freedom:** Ensures that decisions about pregnancy and healthcare are protected from government interference.
- **Secures LGBTQ+ Rights:** Strengthens protections for transgender and nonbinary people, as well as LGBTQ+ individuals, against discrimination.
- **Advances Disability Justice:** Guarantees that Minnesotans with disabilities receive equal protection under the law.
- **Combats Racial Discrimination:** Offers stronger legal recourse against state-sanctioned racial injustice and inequality.

In a time when basic rights and freedoms are under attack across the country, we fully support a state Equal Rights Amendment as a crucial step in protecting our rights and freedoms.

You are an advocate. Let's create an action plan!

- What are your goals? Who is on your list to talk with about trans equity?
- What resources and support do you need to intervene when someone is talking about trans people in a negative way?
- How many people can you get to sign on to our open letter in support of trans inclusion in sports?
- Other actions and events:
 - Write a letter, email, or make a call to your state legislators in support of the ERA.
 - Write a letter to the editor in support of trans inclusion and equity
 - Post on your socials promoting love and support for trans people
 - Other ideas? You got this!
- You can use your skills to create positive change in your communities. We need more people working together to bring more love and justice for trans people into the world and working to ensure the future of our democracy. We need YOU.



Take Action:

Encourage People to Sign the Letter in
Support of Trans Inclusion in Sports

<https://www.genderjustice.us/letter/>



Take Action:

Mobilize People to Write to their
Legislators in Support of the ERA

<https://www.genderjustice.us/write/>



Get More Info:

Trans Athletes are Protected Under
Law—Here's What You Need to Know

<https://www.genderjustice.us/resource/trans-athletes-protected-under-law/>



Thank You!

Stay Connected to Gender Justice

**Invite others to sign up for our
monthly Trans Equity Training**

genderjustice.us/transequitytraining

**Sign up to get updates from
Gender Justice**

genderjustice.us/stay-informed/

