

## Targeted by the right Transgender youth are in the crosshairs of lawmakers

COVERSTORY

By ANGELICA VENTURINA & ANGELINA GEVORGYAN

pearance. It goes beyond the genitals.

ender is more than

male or female. It goes

Younger generations

are rejecting centuries

of gender norms and

existing outside of the strict definitions of

gender confined to only a man and woman

by embracing their unique gender identities.

Gen Z is overwhelmingly rejecting estab-

lished systems and institutions including

gender. This reluctance to adapt to what

like never before.

has long been accepted has allowed young

people to welcome differences and diversity

Conservatives are trying to turn back the

clock to a time when men were men and

girls were girls. Gender fluidity is seen as

a threat to traditional values. Increasingly

explosion of anti-LGBT bills being passed by

An aversion to change and the ability to

score easy political points by attacking the widely misunderstood topic in states like Florida and Texas has led to the banning of

But it's not all gloom and doom. Law-

makers in 18 states are following Califor-

nia's lead in seeking to offer legal refuge to

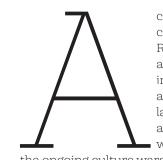
transgender youth and their families living

heated right-wing rhetoric has led to an

red states over the past few years.

gender-affirming care for youth.

beyond physical ap-



cross the country, Republicans are increasingly using anti-trans laws as a loaded

the ongoing culture wars.

increasingly using anti-trans laws as a weapon in the ongoing culture wars.

The politicians leading the charge are Florida Governor Rick DeSantis, and Texas Governor Greg Abbott - both Republicans and both 2024 Presidential hopefuls.

In less than three months, a wave of 238 anti-LGBTQ bills have been proposed by state lawmakers across the U.S., with over half of them targeting people who identify as transgender. These measures include criminal-

izing healthcare for trans youth and excluding transgender youth from school and sports.

In late February, Abbott ordered state employees, teachers and doctors to report parents who try to access gender-affirming treatments. This executive order was issued after Attorney General Ken Paxton released a nonbinding legal opinion that medical treatments for transgender youth, including hormone injections and puberty blockers, should be classi-Across the country, Republicans are fied as child abuse. Parents who try to get that treatment for their kids are then investigated by child protective

Families of transgender kids living in Texas have expressed that, in protection and support of their children, they are prepared to move to other states.

Senior Jude Struble, a transgender man, sympathizes with trans youth living in Texas, having experienced the challenges of navigating his own

"I remember what it was like being

so confused about everything and it actually took me a long time to fully realize that I was transgender," Struble said. "I had transgender friends and understood what it meant to be transgender, but there were so many different opinions out there, especially online, about what it means to be a transgender person. I didn't fit the exact criteria I heard online and

Struble experimented with different names and pronouns before he came out in fall of 2019.

belong to that group."

elsewhere, so I thought that I couldn't

"It was more of a disconnect from the 'feminine' parts of my body and an internal feeling of masculinity despite my outside appearance," he said.

He found that having access to physicians specializing in gender-affirming care was what helped him most in the process of transitioning.

"These kids have nothing, they're just gonna be alone and lost and in this terrible emotional state and anybody who's trying to help them is



being punished," he said. "That's such a horrible situation to be in."

ASB President Nick Kumar, also a transgender man, feels that the attacks are out of pure ignorance.

"These bills portray extremist ideas that are completely baseless," he said. "Gender identity is developed around the age of three to five years old, and while not everyone realizes they are transgender at that time, it doesn't invalidate any child's identity. Genderagenda. In reality, it saves lives." In Florida, Repub-

care is not pushing

kids towards the gay

lican Governor Ron DeSantis attacked the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) after transgender woman and swimmer, Lia Thomas, won against

Olympian swimmer and runner-up, Emma Weyant, in the 500-yard women's freestyle swimming championship event.

This isn't the first time DeSantis targeted transgender people. He passed Senate Bill 1028 last year, which would ban transgender student-athletes from participating in girls' and women's sports. The bill went into effect later in July and is still in effect today.

To social science teacher Mr. Robert Docter, these politicians only care

about gaining more votes.

"The goal at the end of the day for these politicians is to get votes, but sadly the tactic in doing so is by attacking and targeting minority groups - groups that instead deserve the civil rights and civil liberties that all Americans should have equal access and protection to," he said.

Although not all anti-trans bills are moving forward, they are being introduced simultaneously, one after another, with similar intentions: to impede trans youth from accessing medication and school sports.

Kumar aims to ensure that trans youth across the country who are struggling to cope, feel heard and understood.

"For all the trans youth out there, I know visibility is a privilege for us, even though it should be a normality," Kumar said. "I want you all to know that I see you and I love you. This journey can be difficult, so please be patient with yourself. You are a beautiful individual who is deserving."

## By the numbers Gender identification

THE MIRROR | PHOTO COLLAGE BY **STAFF;** IMAGES OF FACES | **PEXELS/CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSING** 

The number of anti-LGBT bills filed each year have skyrocketed over the past few years, with nearly 240 filed in 2022 so far. Nearly

half of these bills target transgender people

Number of youths ages 13 to 17 in the U.S. who identify as trans youth

Number of student athletes in the U.S. who identify as trans SOURCE: ESPN

Number of anti-transgender youth sports ban bills introduced in U.S. state legislatures in 2022 SOURCE: Freedom for all Americans

Number of anti-transgender medical care ban bills introduced in U.S. state legislatures in 2022 SOURCE: Freedom

## FIRST PERSON

I'm nonbinary

**KASSANDRA SOLORZANO** 

'm nonbinary which means I'm

Being a female or male Being nonbinary is a way for me to and truly exist as myself.



hem keep the image of who o know I won't be accepted.

healing their communities.

ifying as nonbinary nowadays are more complex than that.

## Get it right A guide to gender terminology

Young people are embracing their unique gender identities beyond the binary of female and male. Here are terms to learn about gender because they are becoming more common. SOURCE: UNITE UK



