



Speak Out Now

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Pride Month: Celebrate this June by Fighting for the World We Deserve!

This June, once again, we celebrate Pride Month, a month dedicated to the struggles of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Queer people. Today, LGBTQ+ people are in a fierce fight for their right to exist and be free. We need to recognize and uplift their important contributions to society, and also protect their very lives. LGBTQ+ people face a backlash orchestrated by extreme right-wing groups, and taken advantage of by politicians who are tools of the rich, using hatred as the pole to vault them into office.

The First Pride was an Uprising to Remember

Pride Month was established to commemorate the Stonewall Uprising. Stonewall was a gay bar in the 1960s in New York City. Police periodically raided bars like Stonewall, arresting and physically or sexually assaulting their patrons. During one of these raids, on June 28, 1969, the patrons of Stonewall didn't just sit back and wait to get arrested. They put up a fight. And neighbors didn't just walk on by. They joined the fight. Within minutes, hundreds of people were resisting the police violence. This had become a riot. The police became outnumbered and scared, and eventually barricaded themselves inside the bar.

For five more days, protests erupted in the city, sometimes including thousands of people. On the one-year anniversary of the riot, several demonstrators marched past the Stonewall, marking the first Pride Parade. Though this event was not the first instance of LGBTQ+ people fighting back against police violence or discrimination, it has come to symbolize the beginning of a movement.

Today the LGBTQ+ People Face Many Attacks

Most recently, on May 17, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed four bills: a ban on gender-affirming care, an expanded "don't say gay" bill, an anti-drag bill, and a law making it criminal for trans people to use a bathroom that corresponds to their gender. In 2023, according to the ACLU, 452 anti-trans bills were introduced to state legislatures. In Idaho and Indiana, bans on gender-affirming care for minors were recently passed, while in Kansas, the state legislature passed a bill to ban trans women and girls from participating in sports teams. This is all accompanied by far-right media attacks on so-called "gender ideology" – a rallying cry for the far-right.

The overall attack is being orchestrated by groups such as the Alliance Defending Freedom, as well as the Eagle Forum, Concerned Women for America, and the Heritage Foundation. Posing as a grassroots upsurge to protect "parents' rights" and to fight "gender ideology", these national organizations are in reality opposing the actual rights of parents and their LGBTQ+ children, with a propaganda campaign that feeds on fear and ignorance. They have found a lever to move a portion of the population to support a right-wing agenda. Their lever is transphobia and homophobia generally, and it is helping them attack ALL of our rights, using the antidemocratic electoral system, the lower courts, and the Supreme Court. Republican politicians such as DeSantis care less about whether the bills pass and are more concerned that they motivate transphobic and homophobic voters to show up at the polls and vote Republican, nationwide.

To push back the wave of attacks, to change the point of view of the millions who are captives of the right-wing propaganda onslaught, there need to be millions in the streets, making the humanity of trans youth and of LGBTQ+ people evident to all.

Right Now, There are Many Local Protests

On Thursday, May 18 graduates of the New College of Florida held an alternative commencement ceremony in protest of DeSantis' conservative takeover of their college. In addition, thousands of people came out across the country to protest on March 31, for the Transgender Day of Visibility.

The fight back, the protests, and the organizing locally and nationally need to continue. We must affirm that these right-wing politicians and religious organizations, and courts, should have no say over our bodies, our healthcare, or our gender identity. We can't have illusions that this political system will solve the problem. The most important battles don't happen at the ballot box — they happen in the streets, neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces when people get organized, and link arms, uniting our forces against the attacks. Groups that are protesting these attacks must redouble their organizing, and link arms with the other targets of the extreme right.

Let's celebrate Pride this June by fighting for what we deserve!