



Speak Out Now

June 22, 2026 baltimore@speakoutsocialists.org speakoutsocialists.org IG:@sonbaltimore

Pride: Nobody's Free Until Everybody's Free

June is Pride Month, when the LGBTQ+ community celebrates its enduring resilience in the face of discrimination and violent attacks. The surge in anti-queer legislation, hate crimes, and right-wing rhetoric is part of a broader strategy by the right-wing of the ruling class to divide, distract, and suppress people. This doesn't just affect the LGBTQ+ members of society, this divide-and-conquer strategy is meant to keep all of us divided and, as a result, weaker.

Today, LGBTQ+ people – especially trans people – are once again facing attacks and a growing wave of anti-trans hate. In 2026, 530 bills were introduced in legislative bodies across the country to reduce the rights of queer people: to remove healthcare access, censor education, ban books and trans-athletes, and strip anti-discrimination protections. This is part of the campaign to push queer and trans people from public life.

Pride gatherings are declarations that queer people will not be pushed back into the closet. Pride is just that – to declare the right to be who we are – demonstrations of defiance. Our rights have been won by refusing to be silent. Pride didn't start with rainbow flags, or corporate sponsorships. It started as a radical movement.

As long as queer people have been pushed into the closet, they have fought, not just to come out, but to destroy the closet. LGBTQ+ people were organizing in the U.S. in the 1950s, at the height of McCarthyism, despite the risks of being fired, arrested, and publicly outed. The Mattachine Society, founded by former Communist Party members, the Daughters of Bilitis, the first U.S. lesbian organization, and other groups across the country built networks, published newsletters, and held secret meetings to survive and resist.

In the 1960s, as the Civil Rights Movement gave courage to people across the U.S., LGBTQ+ people also began stepping into the open. The fight at the Stonewall Inn in New York City marked a pivotal moment. In 1969, during yet another police raid on a gay bar, queer and trans people—many of them Black, Brown, and unhoused—fought back. For days, crowds gathered and battled police in the streets. Decades of rage against police harassment, social

violence, and systemic exclusion boiled over. It wasn't the first uprising and it wouldn't be the last. But it lit a spark. The following year, people returned to the streets—not to mourn, but to march. That was the first Pride.

The 1970s saw a sharp backlash. These attacks were orchestrated from the top, again by right-wing politicians, religious institutions, and media outlets that were threatened by the social movements of the time. They targeted what they saw as a weak and vulnerable section of the population, people who had been marginalized and were a threat to what those in power called “normal society”.

Today's attacks follow the same playbook. The attacks against LGBTQ+ people are the same: attacking workers' rights, criminalizing immigrants, taking away our healthcare, and abandoning poor and disabled people. Every blow against one group of people, based on gender, race, class, or ability, opens an attack on us all. The gains queer people have won – like the right to access gender-affirming healthcare, obtain the legal benefits of marriage, and to be open about who they are in schools and workplaces – are under attack.

History teaches us that our power lies in solidarity and organization. If we ignore, or even worse, support the attacks on people who are portrayed as being different from us, by those who control society, we undermine our power and our humanity. Falling for the fears stoked by those in power against others is a way to weaken our collective strength. So, whether it is a baseless fear of trans people, strong women, Black people, immigrants, unhoused people, and others, that fear places us on the side of those in power. It is a way for them to divert our attention from their attacks on us.

Every celebration of our being whether it is Pride, Juneteenth, Cinco de Mayo, May Day or others is a celebration of ourselves, our history. It is a collective expression of our hopes for a decent life for all of us.

And when we realize our common interests and use our collective power, we will be able to bring into being the world we all need and deserve.

Reports From Speak Out Members Around the U.S.

Bay Area, California:

Cuts to AHS - An Attack on Us All

Alameda Health Systems (AHS), the public hospital system for Alameda County in the East Bay Area, is facing catastrophic budget mismanagement and Medi-Cal cuts contributed to by both Governor Gavin Newsom and Trump's "Big, Beautiful Bill." The solution, according to AHS's Board of Trustees, is massive layoffs in already understaffed hospitals and closures of much-needed programs. AHS is the county's public safety net healthcare system and includes the East Bay's only Level I Trauma Center. If it can't function, the consequences will be deadly.

Workers at AHS have been fighting back. Their hard work and organizing has gotten the layoffs deferred until July 6, but more cuts are coming, and they need support. Cuts like this are happening everywhere and affect every one of us. We all need to join this fight!

For information and resources, including email generators to flood the Board of Trustees and Board of Supervisors, go to SaveAHS.org.

Newark, New Jersey:

A Struggle Continues in Newark

Since their hunger and work strike began on May 22, it seems that some of those prisoners at Delaney Hall have been moved and that the original strike has been mostly repressed. But a struggle still simmers both inside and outside the detention center.

From within, a group of women made a video statement about a week ago stating that they have also begun a strike. They cited many of the same conditions as the first strikers, but they also emphasized the specific hardships faced by women prisoners. On the outside, a continuous presence of support groups and protesters ebb and flow throughout the days, with sporadic confrontations as ICE attempts to move prisoners.

This is a real struggle between those who want to oppress and dominate us, and those of us who will fight for freedom and human dignity. We need everyone to join this struggle!

We live in the wealthiest country in the world, and it is our labor that has created all of this wealth. We aren't the ones who benefit from this. The super rich — the bosses of the big corporations and banks — keep the wealth and make all the decisions. Working people do the work that makes society run, and we can organize to unite our forces. When we do, we have enormous power to change things and make a better world.

Baltimore, Maryland:

Infrastructure Must Be Safe for Everyone!

Three workers suffered injuries after a June 9 explosion at the Patapsco Wastewater Treatment Plant in south Baltimore near Curtis Bay. Infrastructure disasters are unfortunately common, hurting workers, communities, and the environment in Baltimore and around the country.

Over the winter, a broken pipe in Montgomery County, MD, spilled 243 million gallons of sewage into the Potomac River. And last year in Baltimore, 1.7 million gallons of raw sewage flowed into the Jones Falls stream that leads to the harbor. Even so, the city government has decided to delay repairing the old sewer infrastructure until 2046.

The health of our city, and the safety of workers at the Department of Public Works, depend on updated and reliable infrastructure. Any reasonable society would make it a priority!

The Triangle, North Carolina:

If You Can't Beat 'em...

Make It Harder for People to Vote

Like in much of the U.S., there is a war on voting rights in North Carolina. Recently, the state Republican Party put forward a bill that would make it easier for the GOP state auditor to throw out votes, increase the number of political appointees on the State Board of Elections, ban ranked-choice voting, and even ban election officials from encouraging people to vote. This current bill is on top of prior efforts to eliminate same-day registration, stricter voter ID laws, and removal of early voting sites, particularly in Black communities.

There has been some pushback to these voter suppression tactics, but it hasn't been nearly enough. Whatever democratic rights that we as working people won in the past need to be defended today. We need to come together, and this is not a struggle that our unions, churches and organizations can afford to sit out.

