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# EQUALITY VOTES

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**INSIDE THE ISSUES**



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## INTRODUCTION

2020 provides us the starkest choice in American history: to elect a pro-equality champion as president or to face four more years of a Trump-Pence administration that has attacked LGBTQ people at every opportunity.

Over the last decade, we have seen tremendous progress in the rights and protections LGBTQ people enjoy. But the fight for equality is far from over. Despite our significant steps forward, LGBTQ Americans lack basic legal protections in states across the country. The patchwork nature of current laws leaves millions of people subject to uncertainty and potential discrimination that impacts their safety, their families, and their day-to-day lives whether in their homes or as they travel the country. Transgender women of color are facing violence at epidemic level rates, with 26 known violent deaths of transgender women in 2019.

The 11 million LGBTQ voters and our allies — Equality Voters — will make a significant difference in the 2020 elections both during the primary and caucus season and in the general election. HRC has identified more than 57 million voters for whom issues of equality are a make-or-break issue. LGBTQ and Equality Voters are a force to be reckoned with and a constituency to court.



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## COMPREHENSIVE NONDISCRIMINATION PROTECTIONS

### The Problem:

Despite significant steps towards equality, many LGBTQ Americans continue to lack basic legal protections in the state where they live. Currently, the patchwork of LGBTQ civil rights laws leaves residents of 29 states without clear protections from discrimination. In states across the country, an LGBTQ person is at risk of being fired or denied services solely because of who they are.

### How We Fix It:

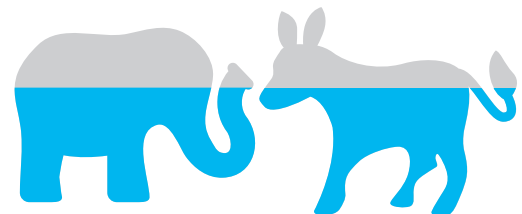
HRC has worked for decades to pass federal nondiscrimination protections through Congress. In 2019, for the first time, the Equality Act passed through the pro-equality U.S. House of Representatives. The Equality Act provides robust, meaningful protections from discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity. These protections are essential to ensuring equal access to opportunities and to enable everyone regardless of who they are or who they love to live authentically and to fully participate in public life. Now, we need a pro-equality Senate and President to make sure we receive the protections our community deserves.

### Why It Matters:

Discrimination degrades individual dignity and prevents many families from developing the stability and financial security that they deserve and need to succeed. Systemic discrimination continues to impact the lives of LGBTQ people nationwide, and the federal government is uniquely positioned to play a powerful role in eliminating it.



**SUPPORT FOR NON-DISCRIMINATION  
UNITES THE COUNTRY.**



**70% SUPPORT**

The nonpartisan Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) found that nationally, support for a bill like the Equality Act topped 70 percent, which includes a majority of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents.



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## VIOLENCE AGAINST LGBTQ PEOPLE: PRIMARILY TRANSGENDER WOMEN OF COLOR

### The Problem:

Since 2016 we have seen a significant increase in violence against LGBTQ people, particularly transgender people and in communities of color. In fact, 2017, 2018, and 2019 proved to be the deadliest years for transgender people on record — at least 81 transgender people lost their lives to violence. In 2019, all but one death was of a black transgender woman. This epidemic of violence is confronting our community across the country and needs a national solution.

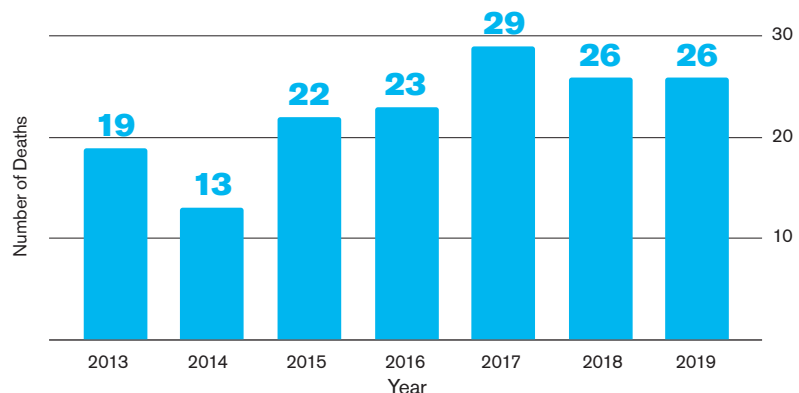
### How We Fix It:

While federal hate crime laws have been significantly strengthened over the past decade, hate crimes laws alone are insufficient to address the violence faced by transgender women of color. Nondiscrimination laws combined with data collection and increased training and education initiatives will be essential in staving off the rise of this violence. Our community needs a President that knows the epidemic of violence is occurring and commits the federal government to identifying resources and solutions to combat it.

### Why It Matters:

Our transgender siblings are dying. Violence against any member of our community sows a culture of fear and otherness that prevents us from living as full, authentic citizens in our democracy. The current, divisive political climate and dangerous rhetoric from the White House increase the risk of violence by dehumanizing members of the LGBTQ community particularly transgender women of color. This harmful, exclusive rhetoric and the policies it supports creates an environment where violence against many minority groups is not only tolerated but celebrated. According to HRC's Youth Survey, 70% of LGBTQ under the age of 18 reported witnessing bullying or harassment since Trump and Pence's election. Further, almost half of respondents say they have taken steps to hide their LGBTQ identity.

### HRC ESTIMATED DEATHS OF TRANSGENDER AND GENDER NON-CONFORMING PEOPLE





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## TRANS MILITARY BAN

### The Problem:

On July 26, 2017 President Trump posted a series of tweets announcing that “[t]he United States will not accept or allow transgender individuals to serve in any capacity in the U.S. Military.” Secretary of Defense James Mattis produced implementation recommendations in March 2018 resulting in a complete ban on transgender people serving in the military. It prohibits transgender people from joining the military, and it prohibits anyone currently in the military from transitioning.

### How We Fix It:

We need a President that commits to issuing an executive order reversing the ban on transgender service members. Congress must also act to ensure transgender service members cannot be discriminated against at whim by an anti-equality President by codifying the military’s existing equal opportunity policies to include non-discrimination protections on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity and sexual orientation.

On behalf of our transgender members serving or wishing to serve, the Human Rights Campaign has joined as an organizational co-plaintiff in a case filed by Lambda Legal and Outserve-SLDN challenging this president’s policy in court.

### Why It Matters:

Anyone who meets the military’s physical and readiness standards should be allowed to serve their country. By issuing this ban, Trump dehumanized the transgender community and inferred their service was inferior to their cisgender compatriots. The military should be recruiting and retaining the best troops to serve in our military, not rejecting or discharging qualified troops simply because of their gender identity. Allowing transgender troops to serve increases readiness. It stops forcing commanders to get rid of highly trained personnel, and it lets transgender troops live their lives authentically so that they can focus on the mission instead of on hiding who they are.

This ban made our country less safe and our military less prepared.





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## HEALTH CARE

### The Problem:

LGBTQ people are at an increased risk of preventable diseases including some forms of cancer, obesity, and diabetes. Consistent access to quality, culturally competent healthcare is essential to bridging the healthcare disparities facing the LGBTQ community and improving our long-term health outcomes. However, discrimination — or the fear of discrimination — too often gets in the way of accessing essential services. Delay and avoidance of care due to fear of discrimination compounds the significant health disparities experienced by LGBTQ people.

### How We Fix It:

We need a President that ensures full enforcement of the sex discrimination provisions under Section 1557 of the ACA. As we enter the fifth decade of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, we recognize the power of the federal government to help end the spread of this disease and to ensure that individuals living with it have the opportunity to lead longer, healthier lives. However, this requires a commitment to prioritizing funding for research and education across the federal government including CDC and NIH.

### Why It Matters:

Systemic discrimination compounds the health disparities facing LGBTQ people and our families. Enforcement of nondiscrimination provisions are essential to ensuring equal access to health insurance coverage and critical healthcare services. The LGBTQ community continues to bear the brunt of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, particularly in communities of color. The federal government must commit to prioritizing the funding necessary to engage in meaningful research and science-based education and prevention efforts to end the epidemic in our lifetime.

56%

70%

According to a Lambda Legal survey, 56 percent of LGB people and 70 percent of transgender and gender non-conforming people reported have experienced discrimination by healthcare providers—including refusal of care, harsh language, and physical roughness—because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

27%

of transgender respondents and 8 percent of LGB respondents reported that they had been denied necessary healthcare because of their gender identity or sexual orientation.



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## SO-CALLED “CONVERSION THERAPY”

### The Problem:

So-called “conversion therapy,” sometimes referred to as “sexual orientation change efforts” or “reparative therapy,” is a range of practices that seek to change an individual’s sexual orientation or gender identity. A 2018 Williams Institute report estimates that approximately 20,000 LGBTQ minors in states without protections will be subjected to conversion therapy by a licensed health care professional before the age of 18. The report found that approximately 698,000 LGBTQ adults in the U.S were subjected to the practice at some point in their lives—350,000 of whom were adolescents at the time.

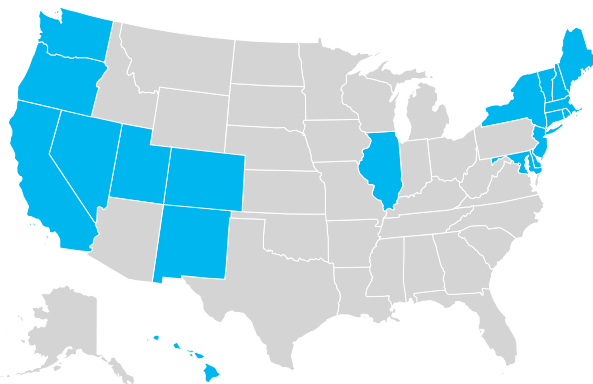
There is no credible evidence that conversion therapy works, and it is abundantly clear that this practice poses devastating health risks for LGBTQ people—especially LGBTQ youth—including depression, decreased self-esteem, substance abuse, homelessness, and even suicide.

### How We Fix It:

The federal government has a duty to protect parents and families from being taken advantage of and defrauded by practitioners of so-called “conversion therapy.” Congress should swiftly pass the Therapeutic Fraud Prevention Act (S.2008), which would officially classify the provision and advertising of conversion therapy in exchange for monetary compensation as fraudulent practices that violate the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Act. While the FTC already has the authority to prohibit this form of consumer fraud, the Therapeutic Fraud Prevention Act would make this authority explicit.

### Why It Matters:

There is no credible evidence that conversion therapy can change a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity. To the contrary, research has clearly shown that conversion therapy poses dangerous health risks for LGBTQ people. Use of these harmful practices can lead to depression, decreased self-esteem, substance abuse, homelessness, and even suicidal behavior.



### STATES THAT PROTECTS YOUTH FROM SO-CALLED “CONVERSION THERAPY” (19 states & D.C.):

California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, Washington





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## VOTING RIGHTS

### The Problem:

More than 50 years after the Voting Rights Act was signed into law, members of the LGBTQ community — particularly LGBTQ people of color and transgender people — continue to encounter significant barriers to voting. Since the Supreme Court gutted the landmark legislation in 2013, state legislatures have blatantly implemented restrictive measures that undermine equal access to the polls and effectively disenfranchise eligible voters. Across the country, LGBTQ voters are forced to navigate an electoral process that comprises a patchwork of strict voter ID laws, cutbacks to early voting, voter roll purges, and other voter suppression tactics.

### How We Fix It:

Congress should immediately pass the Voting Rights Advancement Act (VRAA) to restore and update essential protections guaranteed under the VRA, ensuring all Americans have equal access to the vote.

### Why It Matters:

Transgender voters are disproportionately impacted by strict voter ID laws, the requirements of which vary from state-to-state. Updating or obtaining proper identification can be an arduous and costly process that in some cases, requires corroboration from a physician. A 2018 study by the Williams Institute found that, as a result of strict voter ID laws, 78,000 transgender voters were at risk of disenfranchisement in the midterm election.







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## IMMIGRATION REFORM

### The Problem:

LGBTQ immigrants are more likely to be detained, and disproportionately experience physical abuse and sexual violence while in detention. Despite making up less than 1% of the detained immigrant population in 2017, LGBTQ detainees made up 12% of all reported sexual assaults. Transgender immigrants are especially susceptible to discrimination; a Center for American Progress study showed that in 2017, 1 out of every 8 transgender detainees had been placed in solitary confinement.

### How We Fix It:

We must elect a President that will sign the DREAM Act and comprehensive reform to our broken immigration system. Commonsense immigration reform should reflect the enormous contributions that immigrants have made to our communities and economy while also addressing the ongoing humanitarian crisis at the border. In particular, it must acknowledge the discriminatory treatment of LGBTQ immigrants who are often seeking refuge in the United States to flee persecution and violence in their home countries.

### Why It Matters:

America's immigration system has long been broken, and the actions of the Trump administration over the past two years have exacerbated the issue into a humanitarian crisis for thousands of individuals and families fleeing violence, persecution, and poverty in their home countries. LGBTQ immigrant detainees disproportionately experience physical and sexual abuse in detention centers as a result of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

