

State Legislatures Swamped by Anti-LGBTQ+ Bills

From **Staff Reports**

Across the country, state legislatures have been flooded by a record number of anti-LGBTQ+ bills this year – a deluge fueled by hateful rhetoric and disinformation.

More than 460 anti-LGBTQ+ bills have been introduced in legislatures this year, the American Civil Liberties Union found. More anti-LGBTQ+ bills have been introduced in legislatures in 2023 than in the past five years combined, according to Bloomberg. The Southern Poverty Law Center's lobbying arm, the SPLC Action Fund, is



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not only pushing back against these efforts but encouraging people to speak out at the state level.

“The SPLC Action Fund is dedicated to stopping such legislation, but we cannot overstate the importance of each of us uniting our voices in opposition to these harmful policies,” said Shay Farley, SPLC Action Fund regional policy director. “Each of us has a role to play in turning back the attacks targeting the LGBTQ+ community.”

As the SPLC's Intelligence Project has reported, the Family Research Council (FRC), an anti-LGBTQ+ hate group, has lobbied legislatures across

the country to pass legislation banning gender-affirming health care for minors. Model legislation known as the Save Adolescents From Experimentation Act, or SAFE Act, was drafted by the FRC.

However, it has been shown that trans children who have not been affirmed in their gender identity are more likely to engage in self-harm. What's more, trans children are more likely to continue to identify as trans as they grow up, studies show. Yet lawmakers and the far right have promoted hateful disinformation about trans people that ultimately denies them the ability to live safely and freely.

These points were highlighted in a recent Newsweek.com op-ed by SPLC Action Fund President and CEO Margaret Huang and Imara Jones, founder and CEO of TransLash Media, and its investigative podcast, *The Anti-Trans Hate Machine: A Plot Against Equality*.

“We have a responsibility to uplift and affirm transgender people and amplify their voices, especially those fighting against hate,” Huang and Jones say in the op-ed observing Transgender Day of Visibility. “When we embrace and celebrate people for who we are, no amount of disinformation or hate can quell our collective power.” ●