



Happy 2025 everyone!

2025 has begun and we are already seeing signs that we have work to do both locally and nationally to combat those who seem to feel LGBTQ rights are not valid and important. We are here to help and trying to prepare for what we see as a long journey and we hope you will reach out and share information that you may have in order to help with fighting the issues.

Back in December, at our support meeting we looked at some resources that might help others to feel more at ease with what the future may have in store. This email is an extension of that support meeting and I hope that you will save this email so that you can refer back to it in times of need. Not all of this is on our website, yet, but hopefully it will give you links for resources that will get you started.

To begin, I am going to share with you [a document that Human Rights Campaign](#) put together in anticipation of this. I am going to share **directly from that document as it is full of great links and I have added some additional links peppered in**, that you can use. Topics that they address are things like:

- Finding mental health support
- Staying safe and empowered
- Online safety and privacy
- Talking to your kids about the election results
- What are your legal protections now and how could they change
- Do you need new documents that have gender markers on them
- What about marriage equality?
- Gender affirming care
- How can I get involved?

We don't have all the answers but hopefully this will help you get started and help relieve some stress and anxiety about the future

Mental Health Support

Be in a community with like-minded, safe, supportive people but if you are struggling with your mental health, feeling like you may hurt yourself or someone else, please reach out to one of these crisis resources for help.

[988 Lifeline](#): call or text 988

[The Trevor Project](#): call 866-488-7386 or text 678678

If you are looking for mental health support and community, but are not in crisis or in immediate need, try these resources:

[CenterLink](#): Find a local LGBTQ+ center or program near you with CenterLink's database.

[Trans Lifeline](#): This resource connects transgender, non-binary, and gender-expansive folks to community and resources.

[SAGE x HearMe](#): On-demand mental health wellness app for LGBTQ+ elders.

[TrevorSpace](#): LGBTQ+ affirming online community for 13-24 year-olds.

[Q Chat Space](#): Online moderated chat for LGBTQ+ youth ages 13-19 year-olds.

[imi Guide](#): Resources for LGBTQ+ youth by LGBTQ+ youth.

[PFLAG](#): Seek out a local PFLAG chapter to find a community of parents and family members of LGBTQ+ people.

[Rainbow Youth Project](#): No-cost mental health services and [transgender health care assistance](#) for LGBTQIA+ young people

The HRC Foundation also has [a more comprehensive list of resources and hotlines](#), including those targeted to specific populations.

Staying Safe and Empowered

Here are some proactive, empowering steps you can take to feel more in control and supported:

- **Build Your Safety Network:** Safety starts with community. Connecting with your loved ones, friends and other LGBTQ+ individuals can offer both emotional and

practical support. Together, you can create a safety plan that works for you. For example:

- When attending public events or visiting LGBTQ+ spaces, discuss plans for mutual safety. Consider checking in with each other at different intervals, and ensure that someone close to you knows your whereabouts.
 - If you're heading out on your own, you might want to share your location with a trusted friend or family member through your phone so that they can keep an eye on your well-being.
 - Create a support network to lean on when you need it. We rise by lifting each other up.
- **Decide How You Show Your Visibility:** Being open about who you are is a powerful act, but it's okay to decide when and where you feel most comfortable expressing yourself. Here are some ideas to empower your choices:
 - **Evaluate Your Surroundings:** If you're not sure about the level of support from those around you—whether neighbors or coworkers—understand that visibility through pride flags, public displays of affection and discussing your identity with others may open questions, dialogue and reactions. Some of these will be positive, some may be negative, and many may increase understanding of LGBTQ+ people.
 - **Empower Yourself with Knowledge and Skills:** Feeling prepared can significantly boost your confidence and sense of control. Consider taking steps like:
 - Self-defense training: Queer- and trans-friendly self-defense classes can help you feel more empowered in your body and increase your confidence in handling potential threats.
 - De-escalation training: Knowing how to respond to conflict, harassment, or dangerous situations calmly and assertively can help you stay in control. Many organizations offer these classes, which can also teach how to protect others and maintain a sense of safety in tense moments.
 - **Take Your Time:** Remember, decisions about visibility and safety are deeply personal, and there's no one-size-fits-all answer. Take the time to assess what feels right for you. Your safety is a priority, but your authenticity is equally important. You deserve to live and love without fear.
 - **Take Action Against Hate and Violence:** If you witness or experience hate speech, harassment, or violence, you are not powerless. There are clear steps you can take to stand up for yourself and others:
 - **Report Incidents:** If you encounter hate speech online or in public, report it to the platform or entity involved—whether that's a store manager or social media moderator. Many platforms have codes of conduct that may remove harmful content.
 - **Report to Authorities:** If you feel safe doing so, contact local law enforcement. Many police departments have LGBTQ+ liaison officers trained to engage with our community.

- **Access Community Resources:** Don't hesitate to reach out to local LGBTQ+ organizations for support. You're not alone, and seeking help can make a world of difference in processing traumatic experiences or simply knowing what resources are available to you.

A Final Word of Empowerment

While the world may sometimes feel hostile, we are resilient, and we have a long history of standing strong in the face of adversity. The decisions you make to protect your safety and privacy are yours, and you have the power to choose what feels right for you.

Know that you have a vibrant and supportive community with you. You are not alone, and your authenticity is a strength that the world needs. No matter what challenges arise, you have the agency to navigate them with confidence, power, and resilience.

Stay safe, stay strong, and above all—stay true to who you are. Your safety and your visibility matter. Check out these resources:

- [Get Help & Resources from the Anti-Violence Project](#)
- [Report a hate incident through the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Project](#)
- [Anti-Violence Project's 24-hour hotline and online reporting tool](#)

Online Privacy and Safety

Strengthen Your Online Privacy:

- **Be Mindful of What You Share:** While social media can be a wonderful tool for connection, it's important to be selective about what personal information you post. Avoid sharing sensitive details like your home address, workplace, or private medical information.
- **Strengthen Your Digital Security:** Use strong passwords, enable two-factor authentication, and keep your accounts secure. These simple steps can reduce your risk of being targeted online.
- **Limit Visibility:** Adjust your privacy settings on social media to control who can view your posts. You can decide how much of your identity you wish to share, keeping your peace of mind intact.
- **Connect with Supportive Communities:** There are countless LGBTQ+ online groups and resources that provide guidance and solidarity. While sharing personal details in these spaces is important, always stay cautious about revealing sensitive information like your location or medical details.

Stay Alert and Empowered: Being informed and proactive is key to maintaining your safety. Here are some final tips:

- **Learn about Online Threats:** Understand the common types of online scams, harassment, and hate campaigns targeting LGBTQ+ individuals. Knowing what to look for can help you navigate the digital landscape more safely.
- **Report Suspicious Activity:** If you encounter anything that feels threatening or suspicious online, report it to the relevant platform or authorities. You don't have to face these challenges alone.

Check out these resources for online safety:

- [Online Safety for LGBTQ+ Young People from the Trevor Project](#)
- [HRC Foundation's LGBTQ+ Youth and the Internet Resource](#)
- [Indivisible's Safety, Security, and Digital Preparedness Guide for a Second Trump Administration](#)

Talking to your kids about the election...

For the kids who understood that the stakes of the election were incredibly high for our community, this can be a very difficult conversation to have. It makes sense that finding the right words can feel hard right now.

The most important thing is to have the conversation and let young people know their feelings are okay. Our LGBTQ+ identified kids, or those with LGBTQ+ parents, may have an added level of worry for the future, even if they are not able to articulate or express it. The younger kids around us may be noticing the changes in our mood and trying to understand “what happened” and why the adults around them are more worried, angry, or distracted than usual. It is important to balance providing enough information to alleviate any worry with the actual truth that is in fact quite scary for us all.

Follow your child's lead and respond if and when they express concern or curiosity. How you respond will depend on the age and stage of development of your child, and how tuned in they are to the political realities around us. A few suggestions include:

- **None of us is alone.** Nearly half of voters supported Harris-Walz, which means there are millions of people who want the kind of world we want, one that is safe and welcoming for LGBTQ+ people.
- **We are all still here and we will keep fighting.** This community is made of brave, resilient people who have never stopped fighting for the world to be a better, more loving place. We've fought this very president before and we know what to do. We will never stop fighting.

We can take action. Living in a democracy means that we have to work to make sure that the government of the people, by the people, and for the people includes *us*. Channeling our feelings into action can be helpful. We can be a part of building political power, working in the community, and helping good-hearted, fair-minded people understand and support our community.

Teen QChat space- <https://www.qchatspace.org/>

Q Chat Space's goal is to help LGBTQ+ and questioning teens (13 to 19 years old) find community and connect with peers in a supportive environment that encourages them to feel pride in their identities & increases their mental well-being, all of which is too often missing from their lives! We achieve this goal by providing live, chat-based support groups that are facilitated by trained staff/volunteers from LGBTQ+ centers across the United States. Check our [chat schedule](#) to learn more about the upcoming chat topics and times!

Q Chat Space is a project of CenterLink in collaboration with PFLAG and Planned Parenthood

The **Trans Youth Emergency Project** is here to help families navigate this complex and exhausting maze, offering logistical and financial support. Our team provides 1-on-1 custom patient navigation services and supports families of transgender youth with emergency grants to help them travel out of state for care.

Cruel laws banning best-practice gender-affirming care have passed in 25 states across the country – and as a result, thousands of transgender youth and their families are being forced to travel extreme distances and take on significant expenses just to get the care they need.

<https://southernequality.org/tyep/>

What are your legal protections now and how could they change?

All LGBTQ+ people have some protections from discrimination, but the strength and scope of those protections vary greatly depending on where you live. [Many states have non-discrimination laws](#) that include sexual orientation and gender identity, and some cities and counties do as well.

Additionally, there are federal non-discrimination protections for LGBTQ+ people too. In 2020, the Supreme Court of the United States held in *Bostock v. Clayton County* that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 - which prohibits discrimination in employment - prohibits discrimination against LGBTQ+ employees. This effectively extended non-discrimination protections in employment to many LGBTQ+ people. Because these protections are embedded in federal law, a new presidential administration cannot change them without congressional action. In addition, public sector employees at all levels of government have protections under the equal protection clause of the U.S. Constitution.

While we are certainly braced for attacks on LGBTQ+ inclusive non-discrimination protections and will be prepared to resist such efforts, **it is also important to understand that these protections are well-established and not easy to overturn.** It is possible that these protections will be narrowed through broad interpretations of exemptions, but they are written in statute and remain the law. **HRC will continue to push for the Equality Act**, which would when passed, solidify and expand these protections in federal law.

It is also critical to stay informed on **state legislative action**. State legislative sessions vary in timing, length, and scope, but some state legislatures will begin their 2025 sessions first thing in January. State laws have a tremendous impact on your rights and quality of life, so it is critical to stay informed about what is happening in your legislature.

How to stay informed about what is happening in your state:

- [HRC's state maps resource shows laws impacting LGBTQ+ rights across the country.](#)
- [HRC's Municipal Equality Index examines how inclusive municipal laws, policies, and services are for LGBTQ+ people who live and work there.](#)
- [HRC's State Equality Index is a state-by-state report that provides a review of statewide laws and policies that affect LGBTQ+ people and their families.](#)
- [Get involved with HRC and find your local community.](#)
- **Lawyers and Legal Advice**
<https://lgbtqbar.org/programs/member-practice-area-groups/family-law-institute/family-law-attorney-directory/>
 - The National Center for Lesbian Rights' Legal Helpline by calling 800-528-6257.
 - GLAD's Legal Helpline by calling 800-455-GLAD.

Identity Documents and Gender Markers

There are many questions folks may be asking related to gender markers and identity documents. Here are a few considerations.

This is a great time to get a passport or to have your passport updated. For adults, passports need to be renewed every 10 years, which means that a newly updated document will provide 10 years of identity verification. For youth under 16, passports need to be renewed every 5 years. Currently, passport changes do not require evidence of gender beyond self-attestation, and it is possible to obtain an X gender marker on your passport. People living in states that allow for gender marker updates to birth certificates, driver's licenses, and other state identity documents may also wish to update those documents too.

Generally, having a gender marker on identity documents that reflects your gender is ideal. Considerations include having documents that match each other, that match your gender identity and/or presentation. Some gender markers to consider updating include your driver's license, Social Security card, or other IDs.

If you're unsure what makes most sense for you, **reach out to local LGBTQ+ advocacy groups or legal aid services for personalized advice. Decisions around IDs are truly individual -- and discussing how you will likely be using your identification and how your gender expression may come into play in each situation is important as you consider next steps.** Being proactive can help protect your rights and provide peace of mind. Be sure to keep copies of all of your documentation in a safe but accessible place.

Check out these resources:

- [Advocates for Trans Equality's ID Center provides up-to-date information on updating identity documents by state and federal laws.](#)
- [Search CenterLink's directory to find your local LGBTQ+ center](#)
- [Find state-by-state guidance on gender marker updates through HRC's state scorecards.](#)
- **Another ID Documents Center resource**
Welcome to our one-stop hub for name and gender change information. Find out how to update your name and gender on state and federal IDs and records.
<https://transequality.org/documents>
<https://transequality.org/name-change-project>

What about marriage equality?

Now is a good time to speak with an attorney to ensure that you have taken the protections you can to safeguard your family's safety and resources. Depending on your situation, the attorney may advise you to:

- Ensure that both partners' names are on important documents, including deeds and financial accounts.
- Write a will, and if you have children engage in a second-parent adoption to ensure your legal rights to parent your child, or take other steps. There are important tax, federal benefits, health benefits, and immigration considerations to consider as well.

There are alternatives to getting married. Marriage provides many critical rights, benefits, and obligations for couples and their families. Some of these benefits can be secured outside of marriage, including: through wills, powers of attorney, and similar arrangements. However, nothing will provide protections that are as comprehensive as those provided by getting married. Some legal steps, like second-parent adoptions, are often advisable even for couples who are legally married.

Marriage equality is the law. When Justice Thomas wrote in the *Dobbs* decision that *Obergefell* (the marriage equality decision) should be reconsidered, he was writing only for himself; the decision by the majority of the Court specifically said that abortion and marriage equality are different legal questions. In addition, **Congress passed the Respect for Marriage Act that guarantees that all legally married same-sex couples are entitled to all of the federal rights, benefits and obligations of marriage regardless of future Supreme Court actions.** Understandably, couples may remain concerned — however, marriage is a complex legal as well as personal commitment and should not be entered into lightly

Periods of change are a good time to update or create legal documents that provide additional security to all couples. Please speak to an attorney in your state who has experience

with LGBTQ+ family law and estate planning about what legal actions are most appropriate for your family, regardless of whether or not marriage is part of your family's plan.

Here are helpful resources:

- [The LGBT Family Law Institute® Directory of experienced LGBTQ+ family law practitioners from LGBTQ+ Bar and the National Center for Lesbian Rights](#)
- [The Dobbs Decision: Protecting LGBTQ+ Families resource from Family Equality Council](#)

Gender Affirming Care

Gender-affirming care is best-practice health care that is recommended by the entire mainstream American medical establishment. Despite this fact, about half of the states already prohibit transgender youth from accessing safe, age-appropriate hormonal care like puberty blockers, and some states restrict adults from receiving care as well.

At this time, the most important thing you can do is be ready. **Protect yourself and your child by keeping their medical care private** — be cautious of sharing the names or locations of doctors or practices, treat patient care plans with the utmost confidentiality, and share as little as possible in writing. Even the most innocuous information can be twisted or misconstrued.

Work with your health care provider on how to handle possible interruptions in your treatment plan and what to do in the event that your ability to seek medical care is abruptly impacted (this also applies to reproductive health options, PrEP, and HIV+ treatment, among other things). Ensure that your family, especially any minor children, understand whether and with whom they must share information and when they may refuse.

Some states have laws that extend protections to medical professionals who provide gender-affirming care, and some also extend some protection in certain circumstances to some patients and their families. Before relying on these laws be sure to consult with a legal professional to help ensure your family's safety. Know the laws in your area and the areas to which you travel, and plan ahead whenever possible.

You can find LGBTQ+-friendly clinics and networks for consistent care here:

- [The HRC Foundation's Healthcare Facilities Search](#)
- [LGBTQ+ Healthcare Directory](#)
- [Trans Youth Emergency Project](#)
- [Planned Parenthood's Gender-Affirming Care Services](#)

Learn more about [your healthcare rights](#).

I don't know where the nearest Planned Parenthood location is but this is good information to have too.

Planned Parenthood believes you deserve high-quality, compassionate health care — no matter your gender identity.

Most of our health centers provide hormone therapy and other gender-affirming services for transgender and nonbinary patients.

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/get-care/our-services/gender-affirming-care>

LGBTQ+ Healthcare Directory

<https://lgbtqhealthcaredirectory.org/>

How can you get involved?

Locally, we are here and because you are receiving this email then you know that we are here. We hope that you will step up your support with us and see how you might help us to voice concerns, attend meetings, make calls to representatives, or just send us some money....

But, here are some other ways too...

HRC is committed to keeping you informed. We have been here through pro-equality administrations and anti-equality administrations, and we have never stopped fighting for our community. We are in the fight now, alongside you.

If you're looking for ways to help, you could join local networks and mutual aid groups, check in with your people (particularly youth, the elderly, and trans folks in your community), ask for help when you need it, and show up when opportunities arise to support others.

Mutual Aid Resources

- [Trans Lifeline's database of mutual aid networks](#)
- [Folx Health's database of mutual aid funds](#)

Mental Health Resources

- [The Trevor Project - Resources for Talking About Suicide](#)
- [Active Minds - Signs & Symptoms](#)
- [Mental Health America - Helping Someone Else](#)

HRC advocates for the LGBTQ+ community at the federal, state, and local levels and shares lots of information about the work happening there with our stakeholders, members, and volunteers. We

also engage in programs across the country to continue to transform and hold accountable the institutions that comprise American life. [Stay connected with HRC](#) for updates and advocacy opportunities.

And some additional information.....

Steps LGBTQ+ Families Can Take to Protect Their Family

<https://familyequality.org/resources/the-dobbs-decision-protecting-lgbtq-families/>

Adoption

<https://familyequality.org/resources/adoption-options-for-the-lgbtq-community-handbook/>

I hope that this list will help you to find the help that you need. We hope to add more to this list in the future and will be adding it to our website so it is available to you. If you think you have local resources that you would like to add to this list....PLEASE share those with us and reach out to us with services that you can provide.

As always, Stay Safe and Lead with LOVE!



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