



March Newsletter 2025

Shenandoah County School Board Voted Against Policy Change

by Lynn McKee, *PFLAG Woodstock VA Outreach Coordinator*



A group of about 10 PFLAG Woodstock members attended the Feb. 13, 2025 Shenandoah County School Board meeting, with a surprisingly good outcome!

Up for a vote that evening was a proposed change to policy GBAB/JFHAB “Privacy, Dignity, and Respect for all Students and Parents in Shenandoah County Public Schools”. Gloria Carlineo had proposed to strike out a section of the existing policy which stated that parents could submit a written request to ask school personnel to use different pronouns or names in an effort to support their child who is going through a gender transition. Her argument for removing this parental right was that it infringed on teachers’ first amendment rights if their religious/ideological beliefs caused them to be uncomfortable with transgender students. During public comments and board discussion it was noted that elsewhere in that policy it is clear that staff have the right to refuse to use students’ new pronouns/names, but Carlineo still wanted it removed from the policy. She made it clear that she does not believe that transgenderism is real, and that those who support youth in their transition are guilty of child abuse.

During the public comment period, the vast majority of those speaking about this policy pointed out the harm that transgender students would suffer if that section were removed. So many excellent speeches, spoken from the heart! One community member who was not associated with our group also spoke against removing the identified section, with the reasoning that SCPS has many more important issues to address, so why are they spending

such an inordinate amount of time on an issue that affects such a small number of students? Our feelings exactly!

During board discussion, Barlow, Gutshall, and Vance all pointed out that SCPS is using Youngkin's model policy, and that they had been advised to not make additional changes to that. Carlineo presented a powerpoint that was complete with her negative opinion about trans issues, and made it clear that she felt justified by Trump's recent executive orders attacking transgender individuals. Other board members pointed out that EOs are not law and so did not hold legal authority in this case.

The final vote was Barlow, Gutshall, and Vance voting "no", which would keep the policy as is currently written. Carlineo and Rickard voted "yes", to remove parents' rights. Streett was absent.

Although we can count this as a "win" for our students, Carlineo made it clear that she will be bringing this issue back in the future.

Meanwhile, at the March 13 board meeting, the board will be voting on a proposed change to another policy - INB "Teaching About Controversial Issues". This change would allow students who are struggling with gender identity issues to talk with certain school personnel. (Currently no mention of gender identity is allowed at all in school). School administrators, counselors, student support specialists, school psychologists, and school social workers are those listed. Out of those personnel, counselors are the only staff with whom students have regular contact, and it was noted during the budget presentation at the February 13 th meeting , that SCPS currently has SIX school counselor openings and has since the beginning of the school year. This all effectively means that students have very few personnel to turn to when they need to talk about these issues.

One of the talking points in our members' speeches was that we would like them to add teachers to the list of personnel allowed to talk to students. Teachers often have the closest relationship with students, and are most frequently the staff members that field questions and concerns from students.

If you feel strongly about this additional measure to protect and support our students, please reach out to the SCPS board members (below) and encourage them to add teachers to the list of staff available to our students. We would welcome any allies who would like to join us at the board meeting on March 13 th at 6pm; even if you are not comfortable speaking, it is good to show support for our students. We are in this together. Hope to see you there!



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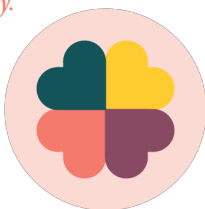
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Being raised in a traditional Virginia community grounded me in so many enduring values that I count myself lucky to hold. But just as there is goodness in the worst of us and darkness in the best of us, I absorbed as a straight little white girl some views from my elders that were distorted by ignorance and bigotry. Although imparted to me by people I will always love, they were not loving views. Like most children, I learned them trustingly and uncritically. Many doors had to open for me to know better. More education helped. Encounters with compassionate Christians helped. Travels beyond my cultural cocoon helped. But most impressive were my encounters and relationships with people whose lives gave me fresh eyes. Being a straight white female didn't change, but understanding the "so what" regarding all of that has been an ongoing journey.

The first time an LGBTQ student came to me in confidence for help, she was on the brink of suicide. The depth of her pain is still a reminder of what people like me never confront. She was terrifically smart and kind and lovely in every way that should matter, but her family and society came close to losing her because she wasn't heterosexual. When I got to witness an LGBTQ ordained person displaying more selfless love than I had seen in any of the churches of my youth, I found a renewal of my faith and a friendship worth gold. But I also saw that gifted minister's unfair struggle to hide, to stay employed. Not a problem I ever had. I saw the commitment of LGBTQ couples who could not marry, but upheld the marriage covenant with more integrity than many legal marriages I knew. I thought how easily people would admire or even envy them if they only understood them.

PFLAG's Education Volunteer, Rhonda Zingraff had the commentary below published in the Northern Virginia Daily in February. Rhonda also holds Safe Zone Trainings for PFLAG Woodstock with organizations that might want to learn more about how to understand LGBTQ issues such as the differences between sex and gender, understanding our biases and how to become a better ally. Reach out to us to schedule one of these 2 hour sessions for your business or organization so that you can better serve the community.



Our Love is Louder!

The transgender daughters or sons or parents I know are not doing anything to endanger or intimidate anyone. Above all, they want to be safe. The ordeal they undergo is not an impulse. It is an effort to be whole. How bizarre that a society so full of heterosexual male aggression would define them as a threat. I grew up female. I know who to fear. It is not the trans community. It is fair game to assess the content of their character or their conduct. It is foul to mistreat them because of gender.

The advantages of being white or the perils of being female were legacies I had no part in creating, yet it's possible to oppose those injustices. Likewise, the protections of my heterosexual lifestyle were not anything I tried to have. They just existed as cultural bigotry amenable to remedy by changing hearts, minds and laws. Not easy work, but possible. Except the current inhumanity directed at LGBTQ people is burning with such a disturbing emotional fire that we need unprecedented efforts to quench it. Cruelty is hard to purge but the truth is not that hard to share.

Rhonda Zingraff
Mount Jackson, VA

Formerly Professor of Sociology at Meredith College in Raleigh, NC, and recently retired Associate Dean with James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA.

Introducing: The Spectrum Podcast

When Trump began writing his Executive Orders after he was sworn in, our member Linda Thomas-Fowler used her amazing skills as a podcaster to create a series of podcasts that would help us understand what the repercussions of those EO's would have on those in the LGBTQ community. As the EO's came faster and faster, so did Linda's podcasts and we have been grateful to be able to share that information with our followers, members, and allies. You can find The Spectrum here on YouTube or here on our website. They are all under 20 minutes long and allow her to spend enough time to share information that is timely and brings awareness to our current political climate. Linda is amazing and her topics range from the EOs to being an ally to religious perspectives. Check them out!

If you have a topic that you would like for Linda to cover, reach out to us and we can schedule a time to discuss it with you at pflagwoodstockva@gmail.com



Mark Your Calendar for April 19th so you can come out to PLAY!!!

Yes, we are doing another Game Day and are excited that we have scheduled it for April 19th and it will again be held at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Stephens City. Just like before, we will have Dungeons and Dragons, board games, food and a craft. Plan to come and have some fun either with the games we provide or bring your own and teach us your favorite game.

If you can't join us, feel free to make a donation to offset the cost of the rental on the space and the snacks. The event is FREE and by reserving a ticket we can get an idea of how much food to bring for snacks.

Let's have some fun!!!

Snacks and some games will be provided. Volunteers are welcomed to come at noon to help set up and stay over to help clean up. Either way we hope that you will join in the fun and come and PLAY with us!!!

The place is Unitarian Universalist Church of the Shenandoah Valley at 6380 Valley Pike, Stephens City, VA

The time is from 1:00-5:00 PM



[Reserve your FREE ticket here!](#)

What is Happening in the Courts?

by Linda Thomas-Fowler

Donald Trump has signed five executive orders that seem to deny the reality of transgender people's existence. The text of these order can be found here:

- <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/defending-women-from-gender-ideology-extremism-and-restoring-biological-truth-to-the-federal-government/>
- <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/prioritizing-military-excellence-and-readiness/>
- <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/protecting-children-from-chemical-and-surgical-mutilation/>
- <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/ending-radical-indoctrination-in-k-12-schooling/>
- <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/02/keeping-men-out-of-womens-sports/>

Collectively, these orders deny biological reality and seek to leave no room in society to accommodate transgender people.

There are other orders related to DEI, immigration, and reproductive health that may affect transgender people.

I am not a lawyer and I can't offer legal advice. I will try to refrain from offering predictions or commentary. However, many people think these executive orders are an overreach of executive authority and they have been challenged in the court. This article will attempt to look at the status of these bans and the effect they are having as well as the challenges to them. It probably will not manage to be an exhaustive investigation. Things are changing rapidly and it is possible something has been missed. If anyone is aware of anything that others should know, please let us know and we will get the information out.

Beyond this article, PFLAG has a page that can keep you up to date on these issues:

<https://pflag.org/resource/executive-orders/>.

The first executive order basically says that the Federal government is ordered to only recognize two sexes and that those are defined at conception. As many people have pointed out, this understanding of sex is wrong. It conflates sex and gender and it gets sex wrong. Basically, the foundation on which this, and all the other orders, is based on is flawed. I can't say whether that will influence the courts but one hopes the courts would care that since the claimed justification for the orders is wrong that the orders themselves should not be valid.

The fallout of the first order is that the interactions with the executive branch of the government will not recognize any change in gender marker for people. The obvious group that this affects is government employees. They will be barred from the proper restroom on government property. They will be misidentified on government records.

For those who aren't government employees, it still has a broad reach. Passports will not be issued with the correct gender marker. There are already documented cases of transgender people needing passports to be reissued and having it come back with the wrong gender marker

(<https://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/2025/03/07/transgender-nonbinary-passports/80567094007/>).

If the State Department knows about your transition then it will be extremely problematic for transgender people to travel out of the country. The only group that might be able to slip through would be those who have never had a passport and have had a birth certificate changed prior to applying. However, depending on the level of scrutiny the State Department gives to each passport, even those people could be identified through other means.

While other agencies, like Social Security and the IRS may change gender markers on people, it should not affect benefits since those are not tied to sex or gender, however, as I said, I'm not a lawyer and I may be reading things naively.

If someone is convicted of a crime and sent to federal prison then this order would put transgender women in with men and transgender men in with women. Transgender women would be at much higher risk of violence. They intend to apply this even to post-surgical people.

There is already documented evidence of cisgender women being harassed for using a restroom in government buildings. This is the sort of collateral damage that everyone faces. It is a gross invasion of privacy to be subjected to the "gender police" simply to be able to use a restroom.

The second executive order covers the military. It orders the military to stop gender affirming healthcare for soldiers, forcibly de-transition them and revert any gender markers on their records. Soldiers will either be forced to live a lie or leave the military.

The third order bans any healthcare organization receiving federal funds from providing gender affirming care for anyone under 19. The fallout from this order was immediate with hospitals like UVA and VCU suspending care for anyone under 19.

The fourth order bans K-12 schools from teaching about the reality of gender. We have seen the impact of this here in Shenandoah County with school board member Gloria Carlineo attempting to put this policy in place. The board has prohibited the teaching of anything related to gender but has kept in place a policy allowing parents to inform the school of the name and pronouns to be used for their children. At least for now, Carlineo, despite her recent defeat on this policy, has vowed to try again.

The fifth order seeks to keep transgender women out of sports.

As of this writing, lawsuits challenging at least some parts of all of these orders have been filed. This Forbes article is being updated to show the status of but all the major legal challenges to Trump's executive orders :

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/alisondurkee/2025/02/21/major-lawsuits-against-trump-and-musk-judge-halts-trumps-dei-contract-ban-for-now/>. It has one section devoted to the transgender bans but it does not contain much detail currently.

A judge has issued a preliminary injunction against Trump's ban for transgender care to minors (<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/families-say-trump-administration-violates-court-order-youth-gender-treatments-2025-03-08/>). This means that the order may not be enforced while the case continues through the legal system. UVA Health has resumed care (<https://childrens.uvahealth.com/services/transgender-youth-health>) but VCU Health has only resumed some care but not all (<https://www.chrichmond.org/services/transgender/>). Unfortunately, the administration appears to still be threatening healthcare providers and the plaintiffs have asked the court to enforce the injunction: <https://www.aclu.org/press-releases/families-and-doctors-ask-federal-court-to-enforce-injunction-blocking-trump-administrations-anti-trans-healthcare-policy>. In addition to the case referenced above, several states have also sued the Trump administration over this ban.

There is at least one lawsuit seeking to prevent the withholding of gender affirming care for inmates: <https://www.aclu.org/press-releases/advocates-sue-to-challenge-withholding-of-gender-affirming-care-in-federal-prisons>.

This is one lawsuit on the behalf of transgender inmates: <https://rbgg.com/transgender-women-file-suit-against-bop-challenging-trump-policy-terminating-medical-care-and-moving-them-to-mens-prisons/> and the courts have granted a preliminary injunction. However, there are other lawsuits about healthcare also pending: <https://thehill.com/homenews/lgbtq/5183692-transgender-inmates-sue-trump-bureau-of-prisons-over-policies-restricting-gender-affirming-care/>. There are also claims the DoJ is still attempting to re-house transgender inmates despite the court order.

Glad Law and NCLR have filed a lawsuit to prevent Trump's transgender military ban: <https://www.glad.org/glad-law-and-nclr-file-challenge-to-trumps-transgender-military-ban/>. I don't think this case has been heard in court yet.

A case has been filed over passport markers: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/transgender-rights-lawsuits-challenge-trump-policies/>. This case also does not appear to have been heard yet.

The NCAA has said that it will comply with Trump's transgender sports ban: <https://ogletree.com/insights-resources/blog-posts/ncaa-bars-transgender-athletes-from-womens-sports-aligning-with-president-trumps-executive-order/>. However, there is at least one case pending against this.

It's clear that things are happening rapidly. So far, the legal challenges have been succeeding, but it also appears the Trump administration is continuing to attempt to enforce the bans despite this. None of these cases have reached the Supreme Court yet. There is definitely cause for concern there but this court has not been completely supportive of Trump's cases that have been before the court.



Can You Help Us Purchase Groceries?

PFLAG Woodstock VA has launched a campaign called [Feeding Families in Shenandoah County](#) to help those in Shenandoah County that have been affected by the funding freeze and may begin to have food insecurity. If you can help out with a donation to the campaign we hope to get grocery gift cards before school is out to give to families that might need to stock up for having the kids at home for the summer.

Share the link below, after making a donation, and ask your friends to help us out. We care about the community at large in Shenandoah County and want to help wherever we can.

Thanks!!!!

Wishing you enough!



Susie Wilburn, she/her

president, PFLAG Woodstock VA

[Donate Here to help us purchase Food!](#)