Nex Benedict Toolkit

The death of Nex Benedict, a non-binary teenager who died after being brutally assaulted in their high school, is a gut-wrenching tragedy that exposes the chilling reality of anti-trans hatred. Our hearts are with Nex’s family and community as they grieve the loss of a young life gone too soon. Below you’ll find ways we can collectively take action and help turn this pain into power.

**Take Action TODAY:**
- **SEND A LETTER OF SUPPORT TO 2SLGBTQ+ YOUTH!**
- **DEMAND THE REMOVAL OF EDUCATION OFFICIALS WHO PROMOTE THE POLITICS OF HATE**

**SOCIAL MEDIA TO UPLIFT**
- Instagram posts to reshare here and here
- Tweet and Threads post to amplify
- Amplify our blog post honoring Nex’s life via Facebook and Threads
- We also encourage you to amplify content from Freedom Oklahoma.

**TOP MESSAGING POINTS**

- This hatred is the direct result of anti-equality politicians and right-wing influencers who spread anti-transgender vitriol, including in support of discriminatory legislation, simply for political gain and influence.

- Oklahoma, where Nex lived, has passed a number of anti-transgender laws in the past several years, including a ban on health care for transgender people under 18 and a bill that prevents transgender youth from accessing restroom facilities consistent with their gender identity. It is lost on no one that Nex was brutally assaulted by their peers in a school bathroom.

- At the same time, the state’s Superintendent of Public Instruction, Ryan Walters, who has a history of making transphobic remarks and targeting Oklahoma teachers, recently appointed Chaya Raichik, who runs the anti-LGBTQ hate account Libs of TikTok, to the state’s library board, despite the fact she does not live in Oklahoma and has no credentials for the position. In 2022, Raichik had targeted a teacher at Nex’s school for their support of LGTBQ+ students; this teacher later resigned.

- Nex’s life demands justice. And all students, including all transgender and non-binary students like Nex, have the right to feel safe and protected while attending school.
TOPLINE STATISTICS

- At least 32 transgender and gender-expansive people had their lives taken through violent means in 2023. 84% of the victims were people of color; 50% were Black transgender women.

- Data from HRC and the University of Connecticut’s 2023 LGBTQ+ Youth Report found that LGBTQ+ youth—and trans and gender-expansive youth in particular—face bullying, harassment, and violence in school at alarming rates.
  - Two-thirds of trans and gender-expansive youth had been teased or bullied at school at least once in the prior year—over half of whom were teased specifically for their LGBTQ+ identity—and a fifth had been hit, pushed, or experienced other forms of physical violence at school in just the 30 days prior to the survey.
  - Over half of trans and gender-expansive youth feel unsafe in at least one school setting, with a third reporting they specifically felt unsafe in school restrooms.
  - When trans youth have reported bullying to staff, it has often been ignored. Only a quarter of trans youth who were victimized at school were able to report this to a teacher or staff member, and of those who did, half reported that staff helped only a little—or not at all.

- Already in 2024, HRC is tracking more than 400 anti-LGBTQ+ bills that have been introduced in state legislatures across the country, many of which target transgender people. Eighteen states have introduced bathroom bans similar to the one in place in Oklahoma.
  - Bathroom bans dramatically increase safety risks for trans and gender-expansive youth. The same LGBTQ+ Youth report found that trans youth who are unable to use a school restroom that matches their gender identity are
    - Significantly more likely to screen positive for depression and anxiety
    - Significantly less likely to feel safe in school restrooms and locker rooms
    - Significantly more likely to have experienced bullying, harassment, and physical violence at school in the last 30 days

- According to an ongoing HRC research project, prominent anti-LGBTQ+ influencers created over a thousand posts targeting schools, districts, libraries and individuals in 2023, all for being LGBTQ+ inclusive. This dangerous social media targeting has offline consequences, including death threats and bomb threats, protests, political attacks, and harassing educators into resigning.

SAFETY AND DE-ESCALATION TIPS FOR IN-PERSON EVENTS

- **DO NOT ENGAGE** with opposition! This is the best way to stay safe. Engaging with opposition actively puts our community in danger. Please report any hostile interactions so we can be aware and archive them for our records.

- The opposition uses a variety of tactics, one of which is secretly audio & video recording. Don’t say anything that you wouldn’t want recorded and shared— that’s why not engaging is the safest response to opposition.

- **NEVER BE ALONE**, use the buddy system!

- Here are more tips for protesting safely and peacefully.

NOTE FROM FREEDOM OKLAHOMA ABOUT RESOURCES

We know that stories amplifying attacks on 2SLGBTQ+ people have a measurable negative impact on mental health. We want to offer the note 2SLGBTQ+ affirming crisis support exists through such organizations as, Trans Lifeline (877-565-8860), the Trevor Project (call 1-866-488-7386 or text START to 678-678), and the LGBT Hotline (888-843-4564).