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AN EMPLOYER GUIDE TO SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES IN TEXAS AND BEYOND

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Introduction



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Throughout the country, a historic numbers of bills are being introduced targeting LGBTQ+ people, particularly transgender youth. The devastating nature of these attacks have caused many companies to step up and to offer their assistance in fighting back. Companies have advocated to lawmakers and government officials, joined media efforts in key states, spoken out against these attacks through their own platforms, and responded with support for their employees.

Many companies are still wondering how they can help. Wherever a company may be in terms of engaging on these issues, this resource is designed to jumpstart conversations, motivate companies to understand and wield the great power that they hold, and provide best practices for supporting employees through this difficult time.

Background



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Recently, Texas Governor Greg Abbott shocked the country when he took the unprecedented step of directing Texas's Department of Family and Protective Services to investigate age-appropriate, medically necessary, gender-affirming healthcare for transgender adolescents and teens — the same best-practice care supported by every major medical organization — as child abuse. He is also asking teachers, therapists and other licensed professionals to turn on families supporting those trans youth. While these actions are being challenged in the courts, parents in Texas are terrified that, simply by loving and supporting their kids, they will be reported to Child Protective Services and lose their kids.

Background (cont'd)



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Meanwhile, lawmakers in more than a dozen states are considering anti-transgender legislation, including moving bills in Alabama, Ohio and Arizona that would criminalize healthcare decisions made between parents, medical experts and transgender youth. Extremist politicians are also seeking to remove books that include transgender characters from school libraries, prohibit any discussion of LGBTQ+ people in schools, force teachers to “out” students to their parents, require separate bathrooms for transgender students, and ban transgender youth from playing sports.

These are not real policy conversations. They’re attacks on the very existence of transgender children.

Call to Action



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During this difficult time, the workplace is even more important as a safe, affirming place for LGBTQ+ people and their families. This resource shares best practices from companies that are responding to support their employees in areas where anti-LGBTQ+ policies are impacting them and their families. It also provides additional resources and best practices for company engagement in public policy, affirming and supporting employees, and importantly, leveraging corporate power and influence.

HRC encourages every company to acknowledge and use the incredible power that you hold in the communities around you.

Best Practices to Support Your Employees in Texas and Beyond



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1. STAY UP TO DATE

2. USE THE POWER OF YOUR VOICE

3. LEVERAGE YOUR FINANCIAL POWER

4. ENGAGE YOUR EMPLOYEES

5. PROVIDE OPTIONS AND RESOURCES TO EMPLOYEES

6. THINK ABOUT THE BIGGER PICTURE

1. STAY UP TO DATE

The community where a company operates is a catalyst for growing or diminishing the work of the company. It is critical that companies are aware of what's going on in their community because ultimately it impacts employees, customers, and business. Here are a few resources that will help to keep you up to date.

- Follow HRC on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [TikTok](#)
- Have your government affairs team and others sign up for HRC's [corporate public policy updates](#)
- Have your government affairs team and others sign up for HRC's [corporate public policy webinars](#)
- Email us stakeholders@hrc.org to learn more about opportunities to engage in public policy advocacy



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2. USE THE POWER OF YOUR VOICE

Now more than ever, companies have an incredible opportunity to use the power of their influence. A statement by a CEO, joining a public letter to oppose discriminatory legislation, or creating an inclusive advertisement will not only influence policy but also change the world around us. We saw this as companies stood up in North Carolina and helped defeat HB2, which banned local statutes that protect LGBTQ+ people from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity and prohibited transgender people from using bathrooms and locker rooms that align with their gender identity in schools and government buildings. North Carolina lost over \$3 billion in revenue due in large part to companies shifting expansion and event plans from the state to places where LGBTQ+ customers and employees had legal protections.

HRC encourages every company to acknowledge the incredible power that you hold in the communities around you. Use this power to live into your company's values. Use this power to affirm your employees. And recognizing that discrimination is bad for the bottom line, use this power to protect your business.



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YOUR EXECUTIVE'S VOICE

- Write Op-eds
- Schedule press interviews
- Write blogs
- Engage on social media
- Send internal communications to employees
- Schedule meetings with key
legislators/government officials to voice opposition



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LEVERAGE YOUR CORPORATE VOICE

- Write op-eds
- Offer to help organize or participate in a LGBTQ+ public policy roundtable discussion
- Sign the Business Statement opposing anti-LGBTQ+ state legislation
- Join the Business Coalition for Equality Act to advocate for equality at the federal level for LGBTQ+ persons
- If you're a small business, join the Freedom for All Americans statement against discrimination for small businesses



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3. LEVERAGE YOUR FINANCIAL POWER

Understand the business decisions you're making as these LGBTQ+ policies are in play -- are you expanding business in a state with these policies? Doing a major event in a location considering anti-LGBTQ+ legislation? Consider what shifts you can make that could leverage these decisions for meaningful impact for your LGBTQ+ employees and customers. By announcing publicly that you're pausing an expansion plan or that you're shifting a conference to a less hostile state, you can send a powerful signal to lawmakers about what the business community needs in their state.

Our political system is also heavily dependent upon financial contributions. Lawmakers and elected officials rely on PAC contributions to be elected and remain in office. The FEC reports that there was \$73,525,670 million in PAC contributions to candidates in the 6-month period of January 1, 2021 through June 30, 2021 alone. The companies that participate in corporate giving have an opportunity to ensure that their giving policies and financial expenditures reflect their values. Companies may do so by vetting lawmakers and their records against the company's values of equality and inclusion. Consider the alignment of corporate values of LGBTQ+ inclusion within your political giving portfolio.



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4. ENGAGE YOUR EMPLOYEES

Trans youth and their families, the LGBTQ+ community, advocacy organizations, allies, and many others are facing heightened levels of fear around the attacks on trans youth. Your company has an opportunity to engage employees in a meaningful way by speaking out and proactively engaging with and supporting employees. Now is not the time to remain silent or complicit as these attacks against children continue. Now is the time to speak out and speak up to support your employees. Here are a few ways that we recommend doing so.

- Meet with Employee Resource Group leaders and members. Ask them what they need and meaningfully engage to support those needs.
- Host internal trainings and discussions on allyship and model allyship for your workforce
- To help educate your team members, share information about [transgender youth](#) and materials on the [Parents for Transgender Equality National Council](#) as well as the host of resources that are available for parents

5. PROVIDE OPTIONS AND RESOURCES TO EMPLOYEES

There are many ways that your company can support its employees by providing them with additional options and resources. First, look at your internal benefits and offerings and think about areas where expanded benefits and flexibility may support employees. In addition, organizations of all kinds have compiled incredibly helpful resources that assist parents in finding medically necessary care for their trans kids, connect parents with community organizations that advocate for the LGBTQ+ community, and identify legal and financial resources for parents and their children. Sharing this information with your employees and providing this internal support can make a huge difference.

OPTIONS

- Offer relocation to employees who request relocation because of the political climate and offer monetary relocation assistance
- Expand your Employee Assistance Program and leave offerings



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RESOURCES



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- Included Health has developed an incredible resource that identifies mental health services, community engagement opportunities, care coordinators that assist with healthcare needs, resources for parents of trans kids, opportunities to support advocacy organizations working to help trans kids, and a directory of inclusive healthcare providers.
- FOLX Health has developed a guide that includes access to education networks and organizations that uplift trans voices as well as create community for trans youth and queer people from various communities.
- The ACLU has compiled resources for trans youth in Texas that includes mental health resources, crisis hotlines, and supportive advocacy organizations in Texas by city/geographic area.
- Equality Texas has developed a tool that explains what has happened in Texas, identifies pro bono legal resources for parents of trans kids, and provides information on emergency assistance grants for trans youth and their families.



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6. THINK ABOUT THE BIGGER PICTURE

There are a number of ways that a company can have a broader impact. Each company is uniquely positioned by industry, product, service offering, and the value that the company brings to the marketplace. Use the strengths and expertise of your company to make an impact. Here are a few questions to ask as you brainstorming ways to make an impact.

- What is your company uniquely positioned to do?
- Can you develop a marketing campaign to support trans kids?
- Can you offer a product or service to support trans kids?
- Can you offer pro bono services to trans kids and their families?
- Do you have the ability to provide additional financial support to employees and their dependents who need financial resources to procure medically necessary care?

These are just a few ways in which companies can and have made a difference in these fights. We appreciate your interest and look forward to engaging with you to make meaningful impact.

THANK YOU!

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
WORKPLACE@HRC.ORG



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