



CONVERSATION ★ GUIDE ★

VOTE YOUR
★ RIGHTS ★

ACLU

ACLU 2026 Election LGBTQ Rights Conversation Guide

As this year's election ramps up, many of us would like to talk about the impact of this election on LGBTQ rights but don't know where to start. So we want to make it easy for you. But we need your help to ensure everyone votes for their rights.

Just a simple conversation with your friends and family can activate your community during this election. In fact, having a conversation with your network has shown to increase voter turnout. With LGBTQ rights on the ballot, the ACLU is here to help you navigate those conversations.



Below you'll find information about LGBTQ rights that matters to everyone. We've also included responses to some frequently asked questions, and conversation starters that can help kick-start a dialogue.

In addition, here are some helpful tips to keep in mind when engaging in a conversation:

Helpful Tips

- ★ Create a safe space - A safe conversation is one in which everyone feels comfortable expressing their thoughts and feelings. Offer mutual respect and make the most of common ground.
- ★ Listen - Be interested in what others have experienced and acknowledge their point of view.
- ★ Advocate - Inform yourself about the issues that matter to you, so that you can share the facts. Sharing personal stories can also show what's at stake.



Key Points

- 1 LGBTQ people deserve to live without fear of prejudice or discrimination because of who they are or who they love. But politicians nationwide continue to target transgender people — transgender youth especially — with unlawful and unconstitutional attacks.
- 2 Transgender youth deserve the same chance to thrive as their peers, but face much higher rates of harassment, violence, poverty, homelessness, and suicide. Ensuring they have safe schools, loving homes, and inclusive communities is paramount to helping these vulnerable young people.
- 3 In recent years, politicians have targeted transgender youth with baseless and discriminatory laws attempting to limit their rights in school — forcing them to use the wrong restrooms, banning them from school sports, censoring stories and books about their experiences, and banning lifesaving gender-affirming health care.

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Gender-affirming care is lifesaving care, giving transgender people the same chance to thrive as their peers. But the same people banning abortion across the country are fighting to criminalize this specialized form of medicine, terrorizing providers and hospitals, and even threatening to remove transgender youth from their parents' custody.

FAQ

Q:

What is gender-affirming care?

A:

Gender-affirming care is a very individualized form of health care, and will look different for each person depending on their age, gender, and other physical and mental health needs. For prepubescent transgender youth, this care typically involves a “social transition” (changing clothes, hair, name, etc.) and never involves surgery or other irreversible medical treatments. During or after puberty, many transgender youth may receive reversible puberty blockers, hormone replacement therapy, or other medical interventions as prescribed by medical professionals. Older transgender adolescents can and do access surgical care on a case-by-case basis as recommended by the World Professional Association of Transgender Health.

Q: Aren't female transgender athletes cheating?

A: No. Transgender athletes are underrepresented at both the K-12 and collegiate level in every sport. Most professional sports leagues have been playing under trans-inclusive policies for more than a decade, and the full inclusion of transgender athletes has the support of icons like Billie Jean King, Megan Rapino, Abby Wambach, and Sue Bird.

Q: Is the right to same-sex marriage under threat?

A: In his concurring opinion overturning *Roe v. Wade*, Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas raised the possibility of revisiting the Supreme Court precedent that recognized the right to marriage equality. However, the majority opinion of the court made clear the ruling on *Roe* did not impact the right to marriage, and a case doing so would need to go through the entire judicial system.

Q: How can I best support the transgender youth in my life?

A: First and foremost, be thankful a transgender person has shared their authentic self with you. Many remain in the closet for fear of mistreatment, rejection, or even violence. Second, use the name and pronouns they request; try practicing writing about this young person using their new name and pronouns if you find it difficult. Third, ask them about their feeling of safety in other settings — school, home, with friends, or with friends' families. Transgender youth need the adults in their lives to stand up for them and defend their right to safe schools, loving homes, and inclusive communities.

Conversation Starters

- ★ Since February 2022, Texas has been targeting the families of transgender youth and threatening to remove their children from their custody. Just think about your children being taken from you. Families should not be targeted for doing what is best for their child.
- ★ Transgender people are four times as likely to experience violence, three times as likely to go hungry, and twice as likely to live in poverty. Yet, since 2019, the number of anti-transgender bills introduced has doubled, in a coordinated campaign against some of the country's most vulnerable.

Time to Fight for Your Rights

This November let's remind our elected officials that they don't have the final say when it comes to our rights — we do. We know you're ready to vote and take action, make sure your friends and family are ready too.

To find out how each elected official plays a key role in defending our rights, visit:

aclu.org/vote

Share this guide with others so that they can engage their circles too.



The ACLU dares to create a more perfect union — beyond one person, party, or side. Our mission is to realize this promise of the United States Constitution for all and expand the reach of its guarantees.