

# [***Here s How Americans Really Feel About LGBTQ Issues***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68CV-M351-JBCM-F004-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** Americans increasingly support gay and lesbian rights and same-sex marriage, but support for trans issues like gender-affirming care and bathroom access lag behind amid unrelenting GOP criticism.

**Body**

**Topline**

This June s Pride month comes as LGBTQ Americans face a wave of anti-LGBTQ restrictions targeting gender identity from bans on gender-affirming care to teacher constraints on LGBTQ topics and though polling shows Americans are broadly on the side of LGBTQ rights and oppose discrimination, support for transgender issues remains divisive as right-wing attacks escalate.

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A rainbow-colored display near Dupont Circle on June 24, 2020, in Washington, D.C.

Getty Images

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**Key Facts**

**Broad Support For Same-Sex Relationships**: A May 2022 Gallup pollfoundthat 71% of Americans believe gay and lesbian relations are morally acceptable, versus 25% who say they re morally wrong.

**High Support for Same-Sex Marriage:**A significant majority of Americans support same-sex marriage, with 71% backing it in aGallup polltaken in May 2022 a record high in its polling and 61% supporting it in aPew Research pollconducted in October 2022.

**Big Shift Over Time:**Support for same-sex marriage has dramatically risen since Gallup began its polling in 1996, when only 27% supported its legalization, and a majority first supported same-sex marriage in 2011, rising to 60% by the time the Supreme Court declared it legal in Obergefell v. Hodges in 2015.

**Religious Support:** While most demographic groups are largely supportive of same-sex marriage, Gallup notes that weekly churchgoers continue to be the biggest holdout against supporting it 40% backed same-sex marriage as of 2022 though polling from the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) conducted throughout 2022foundthe only religious groups in which only a minority support the issue are Mormons (50% support), Hispanic Protestants (43%), White evangelical Protestants (38%) and Jehovah s Witnesses (19%).

**Anti-Discrimination Protections**: Americans broadly support laws forbidding LGBTQ discrimination in situations like jobs, public accommodations and housing, with PRRI s 2022 polling finding that 80% of Americans support such laws (up from 71% in 2015), including 66% of Republicans and at least 50% support among all major religious demographics.

**Businesses Refusing Services:**As the Supreme Courtprepares to ruleon whether a Web designer can refuse to provide websites for same-sex marriages, PRRI found that 65% of Americans oppose allowing businesses to refuse services to LGBTQ customers for religious reasons though a 57% majority of Republicans support it and 56% said in a December 2022 Quinnipiacpollthat businesses shouldn t refuse services to same-sex couples.

**Gender Identity A Divisive Issue:**A**Washington Post**/Kaiser Family Foundationpollconducted in November and December 2022 finding that 57% believe whether someone is a man or a woman is determined by the sex they were assigned at birth, and Axios/Ipsospollingfrom May finding that only 44% believe that people should be able to decide their gender identity for themselves.

**Anti-Trans Attacks May Be Working:**The GOP s attacks on transgender rights may be rolling back public opinion on larger gender issues, with a Pew pollfindingthat the share of Americans who believe sex is assigned at birth went up from 54% in 2017 to 60% in May 2022.

**But Opposition To Discrimination Remains:**The**Post**/KFFpollfound substantial majorities support laws that prohibit discrimination against transgender Americans, ranging from 65% supporting such laws for the U.S. military to 73% supporting laws that prohibit discrimination in schools and the workplace and 74% backing laws that bar housing-related discrimination.

**Increasing Support For Trans Bathroom Bans:**Support for policies that require people to use restrooms that correspond with their biological sex has increased, however, PRRInoted, going up from only 35% who favored such policies in 2016 to 52% in 2022.

**Gender-Affirming Care Divided On Treatment**: An NPR/PBS NewsHour/Maristpollconducted in March found a 54% majority oppose policies that would criminalize gender-affirming medical care for minors, though the**Post**/KFF poll found that while most Americans support transgender youth receiving gender-affirming counseling or therapy (62% for children ages 10-14 and 66% for those ages 15-17), most oppose transgender youth receiving puberty-blocking medication or hormonal treatments (31% support for ages 10-14 and 42% support for ages 15-17).

**Drag Bans Unpopular:**Americans largely oppose bans on drag performances like a law passed inTennessee nowblockedin court with the NPR/PBS/Marist poll finding that 58% oppose legislation that would restrict drag shows or performances, including 73% of Democrats, 37% of Republicans and 57% of Independents.

**Majority Support Transgender Sports Bans**: A majority of respondents in the**Post**/KFF poll said transgender women and girls should not be allowed to compete with other women and girls, with opposition ranging from 62% opposing trans participation in youth sports and 65% opposing transgender women in college and professional sports, to 66% who were against transgender women in high school sports.

**Don t Say Gay Laws Unpopular**: A March 2022 ABC/Ipsospollfound 62% of Americans oppose legislation like Florida s Parental Rights in Education law known as Don t Say Gay that restricts classroom teachings on gender identity and sexual orientation.

**Gender And Sex Teaching For Younger Students Unpopular:**An October 2022Pew pollfound that K-12 parents were split 31% to 31% on whether students should be taught that gender is determined by sex at birth or not with a 37% plurality saying that topic shouldn t be taught at all and the September**Times**/Siena poll found majorities were opposed to classroom instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity in elementary and middle school (with 70% and 54% opposing, respectively), though a 56% majority was in favor of those topics being taught in high school.

**Big Number**

**7.2%.**That s the percentage of U.S. adults who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or something other than heterosexual, according to aGallup pollreleased in February and conducted in 2022. Approximately 1.6% of U.S. adults identify as transgender or nonbinary, according to aPew pollconducted in May 2022. PRRI spolling which put the share of LGBTQ Americans higher than Gallup s number, at 10% found LGBTQ Americans are more than twice as likely as the general population to be 30 years old or younger, and 28% are Generation-Z. LGBTQ Americans are also more likely to identify as Democrats and be religiously non-affiliated, and the pollster found the highest percentage of LGBTQ Americans is in the South (36%), followed by the West (29%), Midwest (20%) and Northeast (16%).

**What To Watch For**

Some experts cited by the**Post**predict public opinion on some transgender issues could evolve and improve over time, as they did with same-sex marriage. If past is prologue, we can say that we re looking at an 8- to 10-year time line, American University professor Andrew Flores, who s studied public opinion on LGBTQ issues, told the**Post**. People becoming more familiar with trans issues and forming more personal connections with transgender and nonbinary people will likely help drive up public opinion, with the Post/KFF poll finding that 43% of its poll respondents personally know a transgender person, and those respondents were more likely to believe gender isn t necessarily assigned at birth (53%, versus 35% of respondents overall).

**Key Background**

Conservative efforts to scapegoat LGBTQ Americans specificallyfocusing on trans kids has become an animating effort in American ***politics***, eagerly embraced by GOP presidential candidates, and likely to extend through the next election cycle. State lawmakers have ramped up bills that that restrictgender-affirming carein 20 states, target drag performances and restrict classroom instruction on LGBTQ topics, among other measures. And conservative activists have also begun to increasingly target corporations: Bud Light drewcriticismfrom the right for partnering with transgender influencer Dylan Mulvaney; Disney has been in ayear-long battlewith the Florida government (and its governor in particular) after the company spoke out against the state s Parental Rights in Education law, and Targetannouncedit would remove or move some of its Pride merchandise after it had resulted in store employees being harassed, sparking criticism from LGBTQ advocates andextremism experts. As this year s Pride celebrations get under way, organizers of events inseveral citiessay they plan to increase security in response to the heightened tensions over LGBTQ rights. Some events in Florida have beencanceledin response to concerns over recently passed anti-LGBTQ legislation which restricts gender-affirming care, drag performances and expanded the educational restrictions in the Don t Say Gay law, among other measures and LGBTQ organizations have also issuedtravel advisoriesfor the state.

**Further Reading**

Nebraska Becomes Latest State To Restrict Gender-Affirming Care Here Are All The States With Similar Bans Or Restrictions(Forbes)

Target Removes Pride Items After Conservative Firestorm Sparking Criticism From LGBTQ Groups(Forbes)

More Acceptance but Growing Polarization on LGBTQ Rights: Findings From the 2022 American Values Atlas(PRRI)

About six-in-ten Americans say legalization of same-sex marriage is good for society(Pew Research Center)

Most trans adults say transitioning made them more satisfied with their lives(Washington Post)

Most Americans support anti-trans policies favored by GOP, poll shows(Washington Post)

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