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Since the beginning of 2023, over 500 pieces of anti-trans legislation have been introduced in 49 states, Kansas among them. With five of Kansas's 17 bills being passed despite Gov. Laura Kelly's veto, transgender and non-binary Kansans' rights and way of living are under attack.

Senate Bill 180, passed under the guise of a "Women's Bill of Rights", legally defines transgender people out of existence by defining one's gender as being determined by one's individual birth sex and within the binary of male and female. This means that transgender and non-binary residents will no longer be able to change their sex on their driver's license or birth certificate once the bill goes into effect on July 1, 2023.

Amie Nioce, a transgender woman living in Wichita, warns that SB180 is only the beginning since it provides a framework to further infringe on the rights of transgender Kansans. "This bill isn't doing anything as obviously harmful as banning HRT or making it illegal to talk about queer issues in school, but this is an attack on the legitimacy of transgender identities and the way it has been presented is super insidious," said Nioce. "SB180 essentially denies that transgender people even exist, which is the entire purpose of this recent wave of anti-transgender legislation in Kansas."

House Bill 2238 will also take affect on July 1, 2023, and bans transgender women from participating in school sports from kindergarten through college. In terms of how this will affect high school athletics in Kansas, the Kansas State High School Activities Association claims this bill will only impact three transgender athletes.

Gov. Kelly warned that the passage of these bills will block federal funding, almost \$17 million, and infringe on the rights of Kansans. Kelly has further criticized the Republican majority's insistence on passing anti-trans bills as a purely political strategy that doesn't help Kansans.

These pieces of legislation are only the tip of the iceberg when looking at anti-trans legislation on a national scale. Some states, like Florida, have introduced legislation that would allow the state to take custody of any child that is receiving gender-affirming care. Other states, like Missouri, aim to ban any type of gender-affirming care, such as hormone replacement therapy, for both children and adults.

Anti-trans talking points have recently become the backbone of right-wing rhetoric in America. Speakers at 2023's Conservative Political Action Conference made a point to continually assault transgender rights, with political commentator Michael Knowles openly saying that "transgenderism must be eradicated from public life entirely — the whole preposterous ideology."

This type of rhetoric is eerily reminiscent of one of Lawrence W. Britt's characteristics of fascism: identification of a scapegoat as a unifying cause. By conflating transgender people with "transgenderism" and then accusing that "ideology" of harming children and America's general wellbeing, right-wing pundits and politicians are engaging in an effort to unite their coalition by demonizing the trans community and legislating them out of existence. This type of fearmongering has been historically shown to lead to violence against the targeted group.

For KU Transgender students, these bills will affect them the same as other transgender Kansans, but those who receive gender-affirming care at Watkins Health Services may

soon find that care endangered. House Bill 233, which is currently in committee, will punish any physician who performs gender-affirming care on anyone under the age of 18, which would include transgender KU students aged 17 and 18.

When asked for comment about how this legislation could affect KU students, Director of KU's Center for Sexuality and Gender Diversity Ash Wilson failed to respond.

It remains unclear to what extent the Kansas legislature is willing to go to disenfranchise transgender citizens, but Amie Nioce believes that these efforts don't reflect the will of most Kansans. "I think if the Kansas population was given a chance to actually vote on these issues, it would come out in favor of trans people having freedom and rights," said Nioce.