

## Save Canada group plans to protest Drag Queen Story Time in Peterborough

The Peterborough Examiner (Ontario) Online

February 21, 2023 Tuesday

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**Section:** NEWS

**Length:** 649 words

**Byline:** Joelle Kovach

### Body

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There will be a **protest** and counter-**protest** outside the Peterborough Public Library again on Saturday for a regularly scheduled Drag Queen Story Time with performer Betty Baker - and on Tuesday Baker assured the engagement won't be cancelled.

Storytime is planned for Saturday at 10 a.m.

"We will run a wonderful, family friendly, magical event, all themed around friendship," wrote Baker, a 19-year-old local performer who's done several previous Drag Queen Story Times at the library at the request of parents.

Twice lately - on Sept. 24 and on Jan. 14 - Drag Queen Story Time has drawn record crowds inside the library while also drawing **protests** and counter-**protests** outside.

This time the **protest** is being organized by the Christian youth organization Save Canada, which attended the so-called Freedom Convoy in Ottawa last year and now **protests** drag events.

Members wear red Save Canada ball caps, a nod to the red Make America Great Again caps worn by supporters of former U.S. president Donald Trump (Save Canada's website says their movement was inspired by Trump).

This week Save Canada - which had a presence at the last Peterborough **protest**, Jan. 14 - posted notices to social media inviting people to come on Saturday.

"Join Save Canada as we demonstrate in opposition to the sexualization of children," states the post. "Drag is not child friendly."

The counter-**protest** is being organized by Douro-Dummer Township resident Peter Votsch, who said he's working on it with local members of the Peterborough Labour Council and with Antifa (the far-left anti-fascism movement).

Votsch had invited counter-protesters on Jan. 14; he said in an email to The Examiner on Tuesday that the idea is to "push back hard" against the "far-right" protesters (whom he calls "bigots").

"They have an aggressive agenda aimed at the heart of the labour movement, Indigenous communities, communities of colour and the **LGBTQ** communities - aiming to push back the gains of the last 50 to 60 years," Votsch said in his email.

## Save Canada group plans to protest Drag Queen Story Time in Peterborough

Pastor Ben Inglis of Hill City Baptist Church, along with his friend Paul Lawton, People's Party of Canada candidate in Peterborough-Kawartha in the 2021 federal election, organized the last two protests outside the library - but say they have nothing to do with organizing this one.

However Inglis - who previously called it "insanity" to allow children near drag queens - said in a direct message to The Examiner that he supports Save Canada's efforts to protest any drag events aimed at children.

"This is actually a good opportunity to remember that the responsibility to tell the truth is broader than any one person or institution," Inglis said.

"On that note, I encourage all who stand opposed to these events but who have so far been silent to use this opportunity to make their objections heard."

Coun. Joy Lachica - who asked city council to take a stronger stand on inclusion and diversity, including on LGBTQ matters, last week - said in a text message to The Examiner on Tuesday that community safety and well-being are "paramount" in Peterborough.

"This is what families who attend our Peterborough Public Library deserve and it's what Betty Baker deserves as our library's guest reader. Thanks for inspiring literacy again this Saturday, Betty Baker," Lachica wrote.

Anti-drag protests are happening "every weekend" lately in communities across Canada, said Evan Balgord, the executive director of the Canadian Anti-Hate Network, in an email to The Examiner.

He called it "incredible and heartwarming" that people keep showing up to counter-protest at drag events to "create a fence of protection" around the performers, the community and the young families that attend the drag story times.

"If we're going to build a pro-democracy and anti-hate movement to counter the far-right movement, it's going to start with these drag defences," Balgord wrote.

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**Load-Date:** February 21, 2023

Drag event will draw protesters Controversial teen from Renfrew will protest storytime

## Drag event will draw protesters; Controversial teen from Renfrew will protest storytime

The Peterborough Examiner (Ontario)

February 23, 2023 Thursday

First Edition

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**Section:** LOCAL / NEWS; Pg. A1

**Length:** 656 words

**Byline:** Joelle Kovach Examiner Reporter

### Body

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A 16-year-old from Renfrew who was reportedly suspended from his high school after saying there are only two genders, in a classroom discussion about gender and transgender people, is coming to **protest** Drag Queen Story Time outside the Peterborough Public Library on Saturday.

Josh Alexander belongs to Save Canada, a Christian youth-run organization that has switched from opposing COVID-19 safety measures to **protesting** outside drag queen events.

According to news reports, Alexander was suspended from Grade 11 and later arrested for breach of exclusion order when he attempted to return to class.

His lawyer told The National Post it was because Alexander wouldn't agree to certain conditions to return to school, such as excluding himself from classes where there are two transgender students.

Earlier this month Alexander **protested** a drag queen story time in Ottawa. News outlets reported he was accompanied by his brother - and that the brother was arrested.

Nick Alexander has a Twitter account where he shows photos of his arrest, which he says occurred because he was preaching the gospel outside the event.

**Protests** outside drag events have been frequent across Canada lately, according to the Canadian Anti-Hate Network.

Often the **protests** include homophobic conspiracy theories of child grooming, and many protesters are part of the COVID-19 anti-vaccine and anti-mandate movements.

Drag event will draw protesters Controversial teen from Renfrew will protest storytime

Twice lately - on Sept. 24 and on Jan. 14 - Drag Queen Story Time with local 19-year-old performer Betty Baker has drawn record crowds inside the Peterborough Public Library while also drawing protests and counterprotests outside.

The next story time is planned for Saturday at 10 a.m., and Save Canada is protesting, while LGBTQ service groups PFLAG Peterborough and Rainbow Service Organization are inviting people to come out in support of Baker.

Save Canada protesters often wear the red ball caps that say Save Canada.

"There will be several members from our crew present on Saturday. Among these are Josh Alexander, Nick Alexander and Monty Walker," wrote a Save Canada spokesperson in an email to The Examiner on Wednesday.

"We will be present in order to demonstrate in opposition to the obvious child grooming taking place in the library. Drag is sexual and has no place around children."

But Mayor Jeff Leal says he supports Baker.

"The City of Peterborough supports providing an inclusive, safe community for all residents. We strongly reject any act that incites hate in the community against any particular group," Leal stated Wednesday.

"Thank you to the Peterborough Public Library for promoting an inclusive community, offering programming for all residents."

Peterborough is part of the Canada-wide Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities, Leal also noted.

Rainbow Service Organization - which advocates for and celebrates the LGBTQ community - has been promoting a counter-protest along with PFLAG.

PFLAG (formerly called Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) provides support, education and resources for LGBTQ people and their families.

Peterborough Public Library has regularly held Drag Queen Story Time for awhile. On Tuesday library chief executive officer Jennifer Jones said it's not going to be cancelled.

"Ideally, we can move toward normalizing Drag Queen Story Time. It's going to be a regular part of our story time lineup," she said in her email.

"The library board supports the library in its endeavours to educate and support inclusivity," stated board chair Dan Moloney in a release from Wednesday. "We are behind the library staff and the offering of Drag Queen Story Time."

In its release from Wednesday - which included both Leal's and Moloney's statements - the city reminded residents that Peterborough Police has a portal to report hate incidents online.

The portal to report hate incidents can be accessed at [forms.peterboroughpolice.com/Hate-Bias-Incident](https://forms.peterboroughpolice.com/Hate-Bias-Incident).

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Drag event will draw protesters Controversial teen from Renfrew will protest storytime

**Load-Date:** February 23, 2023

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## Students Across Florida Walk Out in Protest of Ron DeSantis

The New Republic (Online)

February 23, 2023 Thursday 9:09 PM EST

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**Length:** 388 words

**Byline:** Prem Thakker

### Body

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Students at Florida public universities, including Florida State University, the University of Florida, and Florida International University, among others, staged a coordinated walkout Thursday in **protest** of Governor Ron DeSantis's ongoing attacks on education, including policies targeting people of color and **LGBTQ** people.

The student **protests** were inspired in part by the DeSantis administration's order for public universities to provide data on how many people seek gender-affirming care. But the collective action also came to be a stance against the broader authoritarian onslaught directed underneath the DeSantis administration.

Florida school districts are banning books en masse, while others are closing their libraries in order to avoid prosecution under a new law that requires a "specialist" to review every book in school. The New College of Florida's president was forced out by the DeSantis-stacked board of trustees, and replaced with another DeSantis ally. DeSantis has pushed through the "Don't Say Gay" bill, which prevents discussion of sexual orientation and gender identity through third grade. He has lobbied for the "Stop Woke Act," which restricts teaching on race in colleges. And he has announced plans to mandate Western civilization courses and to defund diversity, equity, and inclusion programs on state college campuses.

DeSantis also banned schools from being able to teach Advanced Placement African American studies, after his administration first pushed the College Board to water down the class anyways. He even filed an administrative complaint against the Orlando Philharmonic Plaza Foundation for hosting a drag show, stripping the organization of its liquor license.

While it may feel easy to yield to frustration or cynicism in the face of DeSantian authoritarianism, the kids, as always, are not relenting—for themselves, and those they may not ever know.

"Ron DeSantis, we're on our way to take you down and we're full-steam ahead for a better day," Dream Defenders Tallahassee organizer Malik Gary told Teen Vogue. "For people that work in the minority class, for people of the Black and brown community, for people that identify in the LGBTQIA community, for folks that are somebody, no matter what color, or race, or gender, or ethnicity. Everybody is somebody and deserves respect."

**Load-Date:** May 18, 2023

## Students Across Florida Walk Out in Protest of Ron DeSantis

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## Tampa Bay LGBTQ activists prepare for fight over drag as bans spread

Newstex Blogs

Axios

February 21, 2023 Tuesday 11:25 AM EST

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**Length:** 516 words

**Byline:** Selene San Felice

### Body

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Feb 21, 2023( Axios: <http://axios.com> Delivered by Newstex)

GOP attempts to restrict drag shows could reignite in Florida as other states move to ban the performances.

Driving the news: Tennessee is likely to become the first state to restrict drag performances[1] this year, with a bill expected to pass the state Legislature this week. The legislation — which would criminalize "adult cabaret" performances, like drag shows, on public property — recently advanced to the House[2]. Republicans have targeted drag shows[3] with restrictive bills in at least 14 other states[4] this year. Why it matters: Florida's Legislature convenes next month, and local **LGBTQ** activists expect state lawmakers to revisit the issue after a legislator's attempt to restrict drag flopped last year.

Between the lines: Regulating drag seems to be top of mind for Gov. Ron DeSantis, who earlier this month sent state agencies after a "Drag Queen Christmas" performance in Orlando[5], where all ages were welcome. That's after he sought to revoke a Miami bar[6]'s liquor license for hosting a drag performance in July that kids attended. Flashback: Last year, then-state Rep. Anthony Sabatini (R-Howey-in-the-Hills) said he planned to propose legislation to make bringing a child to a drag show a felony[7] with the potential to terminate parental rights. The move appeared to be prompted by DeSantis suggesting[8] that child protective services should investigate parents who take their children to drag shows. Yes, but: Sabatini never put forward a bill. He lost his bid for Congress last year and is now head of the Lake County GOP.

What they're saying: St. Petersburg-based **LGBTQ** advocacy group Equality Florida is preparing to battle "what we know will be an onslaught of anti-**LGBTQ** legislation," this year, including attacks on drag, spokesperson Brandon Wolf told Axios. "In his desperation to build a presidential campaign on the backs of **LGBTQ** people, DeSantis has already taken aim at small businesses that host drag performances," Wolf said. "It should come as no surprise that he may cajole the Legislature into carrying out his punishment of those small businesses, and the stripping away of parents' rights to choose what entertainment their families enjoy, during session." Representatives for DeSantis did not respond to Axios' request for comment.

[ 1]: <https://www.axios.com/local/nashville/2023/02/17/the-legislatures-week-in-review> [ 2]:  
<https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/drag-shows-illegal-tennessee-protest-1234680380/> [ 3]:  
<https://www.axios.com/local/nw-arkansas/2023/01/23/arkansas-capitol-drag-show-abortion-homicide> [ 4]:  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/02/14/drag-shows-republican-bills-bans/> [ 5]:  
<https://www.axios.com/2023/02/05/ron-desantis-holiday-drag-show-complaint> [ 6]:  
<https://www.tampabay.com/news/florida-politics/2022/07/27/desantis-administration-targets-miami-bar-with-drag->



## Tampa Bay LGBTQ activists prepare for fight over drag as bans spread

show-attended-by-kids/ [ 7]: <https://www.axios.com/local/tampa-bay/2022/06/13/florida-texas-ban-kids-drag-shows> [ 8]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBplHJbMtYo&t=2679s>

## Notes

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**Load-Date:** March 6, 2023

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