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Florida House Democrats on Oppressive LGBTQ Bills Passed

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – The Florida House today passed three extremely oppressive LGBTQ bills that will have serious consequences for fellow Floridians. Florida House Democrats provided the following statements.

“Today, House Republicans continued their open assault on the LGBTQ community with the passage of three bills designed to erase the very existence of transgender Floridians. Collectively, the Transgender Bathroom Ban, Drag Show Ban, and Transgender Health Care Ban dehumanize and endanger transgender individuals, criminalize artistic expression, and strip parents of their rights to seek lifesaving health care for their child, despite the overwhelming benefits of gender-affirming treatment confirmed by numerous national and international medical associations. These bills will also have significant negative financial impacts on our state as businesses and investors who seek to avoid controversy will reconsider hosting their events and housing their businesses in Florida, just as North Carolina and other states experienced a few years back when they passed discriminatory legislation.

“Rather than focusing on critical economic issues, the GOP supermajority wastes taxpayer dollars by waging divisive culture wars that do nothing to help alleviate the financial pressure Floridians are feeling. Floridians are worried about affordable housing, Medicaid expansion, relief for small businesses, and rising property insurance rates. These anti-LGBTQ bills, along with the recent passage of the 6-week abortion ban and permitless carry in Florida, divert attention from the economic challenges that everyday Floridians face. Every Floridian deserves the freedom to be healthy, prosperous, and safe, and none of these bills accomplish that,” said **Leader Fentrice Driskell (D-Tampa)**.

“The bills passed today are yet another outrageous display of government overreach by stripping away access to health care, parental rights, and the bodily autonomy of thousands of Floridians. Passing anti-LGBTQ+ laws, much like abortion bans, are not

only efforts to create solutions to illusory problems as a way of distracting from real issues facing our state; they amount to a massive breach of privacy and a limit on personal freedom. Florida lawmakers have no business inviting themselves into the exam rooms and bathroom stalls of its private citizens,” said **Representative Kelly Skidmore (D-Boca Raton)**.

“Free Florida? Today, Republicans passed three pieces of hateful legislation that take away parental rights, disregards medical freedom, and violates our First Amendment rights. These bills are discriminatory, unnecessary and are bad for our economy,” said **Representative Kristen Arrington (D-Kissimmee)**.

“These bills aren’t about protecting kids. It’s about trying to score political points by vilifying our LGBTQ community. If this anti-LGBTQ legislation was truly about protecting children, Republicans wouldn’t have voted down a common-sense amendment to provide a unisex bathroom in addition to boys and girls bathrooms in schools. Trans kids and the LGBTQ community as a whole are equally deserving of our protection, and yet the dangerous rhetoric we are seeing in our Legislature instead puts lives in danger,” said **Representative Dan Daley (D-Coral Springs)**.

“These bills cast a wide net utilizing vague language in an attempt to criminalize an entire group of people for existing, expressing their individual and collective identities, and celebrating pride.

“Right now, they’re going after the LGBTQ+ community, but on a whim, they can and will come after anyone deemed an ‘other’ when it is in their political interest to do so. With the passing of this bill, we are telling Floridians and Our Nation, that the government has the power to decide what speech, expression, or identity is worthy of constitutional protection- and that is a sad day for Florida.

“I stand with the LGBTQ+ community because you shouldn’t need to be told that you deserve to exist, that you are loved, and your existence is appreciated. Though there are those here who believe otherwise, no act of this legislature can change that,” said **Representative Daryl Campbell (D-Ft. Lauderdale)**.

“There are no words that can accurately describe the amount of hatred and bigotry we’ve seen on the House Floor this week. The shameless actions of Republican leadership to score points from a minority of their base will harm Florida families for years to come. Meanwhile, the real priorities of Floridians like food access and property insurance prices are going unaddressed. It is midnight in the Sunshine state but I will continue to fight for our LGBTQ Floridians no matter what,” said **Representative Michele Rayner-Goolsby (D-St. Petersburg)**.

“The passing of three anti-transgender bills today is an example of the moral panic coming to Florida. Trans people in Florida are just trying to live safe, happy lives and the Legislature has decided that they are a prime target to score political points with their conservative base. My constituents aren't asking for legislation like this, they are focused on their already high and rising property insurance rates and wanting access to affordable health care. Bills like these are a distraction from the reality that my

colleagues on the other side of the aisle do not have solutions to the real problems that Floridians face. To the trans community, I see you, I support you, I love you, and we won't stop fighting for your rights and the rights of all Floridians,” said **Representative Rita Harris (D-Orlando)**.

“Everyone is entitled to basic dignity and respect and we were elected to uphold that. Yet, instead of addressing the real issues like gun violence in schools, the flooding in South Florida, the shameless government overreach in private companies, or the fact that high schools DO NOT have unisex bathrooms, legislative Republicans have created an imaginary enemy to justify their invasion of Floridian’s privacy, the removal of freedoms, and the defamation of children who legislators have referred to as ‘demons,’ ‘imps,’ and ‘mutants,’ said **Representative Johanna López (D-Orlando)**.

“Today the Republicans passed more bills aimed at marginalizing our LGBTQ+ community and taking away more of our residents’ freedoms. Predictably, these bills embrace ‘big government overreach.’ These bills will tell them how to dress, which bathroom they can use and what healthcare they are allowed to access,” said **Representative Katherine Waldron (D-Wellington)**.

“It’s disheartening to see bills pass that only seek to target and demonize vulnerable LGBTQ+ members of our community. These are our brothers, our sisters, our sons and our daughters. These bills are unnecessary. Their effects will be discriminatory. The pain they cause will be real,” said **Representative Lindsay Cross (St. Petersburg)**.

“If my Republican colleagues don’t want their kids to see one of these shows they want to ban, then NEWSFLASH they don’t have to take them. But why are we taking away that choice from Florida parents? This body has insisted Florida parents should have every right to do just that-parent. Every parent has the right to determine what is appropriate for their child, that’s not the government’s job. Let’s stay consistent,” said **Representative LaVon Bracy Davis (D-Ocoee)**.

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