



Today we find ourselves in a shocking and disturbing time, with violence and brutality unleashed in Ukraine. The war that we are seeing unfold in real-time is horrifying to witness, and yet we must pay attention. We are living in a perilous moment, a time when respect for the shared humanity of others feels very much on the decline. While we are seeing overseas what amounts to a genocide of the Ukrainian people, there is another relentless attack that is occurring in the halls of congress and the classrooms of American students. New legislation in many states, with Texas and Florida leading the way, threatening the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and nonbinary people. In the larger picture of all that is going on in the world, there is a very real risk that these issues can be swept under the rug and not given the full level of attention it deserves, however, make no mistake - the LGBTQ community is under attack.

In Florida, the "Don't Say Gay" bill has officially passed, marking a frightening new world where talking about gay, lesbian, and bisexual identity in schools through the third grade is prohibited. This is tantamount to an erasure of our lives and existence. Many lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are parents, aunts, uncles, brothers, and sisters of the children whom this would impact so it automatically teaches inferiority to certain families and relationships. Additionally, there is a message that the word "gay," and the existence of gay people is something so horrible that we must be erased and children should not know of our existence. Not to mention that gay and queer people ourselves were children once, and the next generation of queer youth in Florida will be growing up in harmful and unwelcoming society where they don't have visibility or representation. Additionally, children who are outed at school will be required to be outed to their parents by educators, or risk losing their jobs. This will create a lot of damage as LGBTQ youth will be outed and many will face severe consequences.



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"I am excited to bring my perspective as a mental health counselor to address different ways that we can all practice continuing to improve our mental health."

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Meanwhile in Texas, Governor Greg Abbott is turning “members of the general public” and “licensed professionals” who learn that a parent is in any way supporting their trans child in attaining hormone therapy or puberty blockers to be reported to the state for child abuse. First of all it is such a rare thing for a trans child to have supportive parents, and in the rare occurrence that this happens, to take that child away from a loving and supportive home and potentially place them in foster care, where rates of abuse are a very real possibility, is the ultimate in cruelty and danger to the child.

“Licensed professionals” would include doctors, teachers, nurses and therapists such as myself. To take people in the helping professions whose goals are to protect, educate and heal and turn us into the enemies of those we care for, threatening their families and lives as they know them to be, is cruel to the point that I don’t have words for it. While my heart is with helping professionals in Texas, it is clear based on the code of ethics we must take and act on, that no therapist can abide by these rules.

The cruelty of these new laws is the point. These policies have been created to do the maximum harm possible to LGBTQ people. LGBTQ youth are at higher risk for suicide, mental illness, and homelessness than their straight peers and these policies will only drive those rates up higher. This is an attack on the dignity, rights and equality of the queer community. These laws are only the beginning. We will see other states enact similar or more heinous policies, and it won’t stop here. There is a growing anger and resentment towards the LGBTQ community in this society and we are a vulnerable population. Our rights and our children’s rights can be taken away easily, especially as the religious right in this country grows more emboldened.

This is a time for community togetherness. Many of us are feeling isolated and alone dealing with the effects of a pandemic that has lingered on for two years. Now our community and our identities are being attacked in some of the most vicious and inhumane ways I can imagine. It is so important for us to come together and connect with other queer people. We need to lift each other up, especially in difficult times. We need to remember how powerful we are, finding more ways to center our stories and experiences in all areas of society. Our greatest strength is our humanity which cannot be denied. We will not be othered or demonized. While we never know what the future holds, let’s take a moment to join together and remember that there is strength in numbers. This is a time for activism and hard work as we journey towards true equality.



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The Tyler Clementi Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to end online and offline bullying in schools, workplaces, and faith communities.



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