

Which side are you on? Far-right deepens threats to trans lives, Biden stays silent

written by Melinda Butterfield
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Trans rights supporters rally at the Utah State Capitol in Salt Lake City,

Jan. 25. Photos: Nuanua Collective

You can't use a restroom in a public building, your school, or the airport without facing jail or violence. The medication you rely on to stay alive is suddenly denied you.

You fear arrest for speaking in public or even walking past your neighborhood school. The government is collecting intimate medical and legal records about you – for what purpose, they won't say, but you know it's nothing good.

It sounds like a nightmare, doesn't it? But this is the daily reality facing trans people across the United States in 2024. An entire section of the population is being legislated out of existence before our eyes through a well-financed, coordinated campaign by far-right extremists, with nary a peep from the federal government.

Between this year and last, half of U.S. states have passed anti-trans legislation or enacted executive measures against trans lives.

Threats of violence by neo-Nazis grow in tandem with the “official” attacks. Incursions by hate groups aimed at queer events and spaces are becoming more common even in “safe” cities like Los Angeles and Boston.

In New York, the fascist Patriot Front held a march in lower Manhattan on Jan. 20; videos taken at the scene showed police allowing them to enter the subway system without paying and otherwise taking a completely hands-off attitude. The same day, New York cops viciously attacked a pro-Palestine march in upper Manhattan, targeting protest leaders and arresting at least 12 people.

While the Biden administration is neck-deep in Israel's genocidal campaign against Palestinians in Gaza, another genocide is being prepared right here by Biden's political opponents – against transgender people.



More than 300 hate bills

Since Jan. 1, at least [317 anti-trans bills](#) have been introduced in state legislatures across the country. These are being swiftly voted into law and are even more extreme than those in 2022 and 2023: total bans on gender-affirming healthcare for people of all ages, bathroom bans, refusal to recognize the identities of students and teachers, and increasingly, measures that would make simply being out in public illegal for trans people.

On Jan. 26, [Utah passed HB257](#), a law banning trans students from using the correct restrooms for their gender, trans public employees from using the correct restrooms in their workplaces, and any trans person from using restrooms in public facilities like airports. Trans people could be imprisoned for up to six months – jailed with people of the opposite gender. The law depends on vigilante-style “citizen reporting,” like Texas’s snitch laws on abortion.

The measure also ends gender-affirming care for trans youths and bans them from participating in sports, among many other attacks. Republican leaders bragged about how they revised the bill at the last minute in an attempt to prevent legal challenges like those that met Utah's abortion ban.

Ohio is a beachhead in the Midwest for hate measures. Despite their abortion ban being thoroughly rejected by voters in a statewide referendum, Republicans who dominate the state government have enacted some of the most brutal anti-trans laws this month. On Jan. 24, the state legislature [overrode the veto of Republican Gov. Mike DeWine](#), who thought he could more cleverly achieve the same ends with executive measures. But DeWine's planned attacks on trans lives just weren't vicious enough for his colleagues.

Texas is attempting to [subpoena medical records of trans residents](#) who visit other states for care, while Florida and other states move to compile lists of trans state residents, including legal records related to name and gender changes. These are often paired with measures to rescind identification, like driver's licenses and birth certificates.

Florida is also attempting to force insurance companies to cover [deadly anti-LGBTQ+ "conversion therapy"](#) for trans children while denying them real health care. Oklahoma's Department of Education hired Chaya Raichik, a transphobic social media troll who last year [instigated bomb threats](#) against the Tulsa School District, among many other targets. And on and on.



No protection from Biden, Dems

It seems almost impossible that the anti-trans panic that started a few years ago could grow so swiftly into a campaign of legal and extra-legal eradication. But with zero resistance from Democrats in the White House and Congress – and with the cooperation of more than a few – the fascist measures have advanced unimpeded.

On Jan. 25, Democrats in Maine struck another blow against trans rights, joining Republicans in [voting down a measure](#) to make Maine a sanctuary state.

LGBTQ+ nonprofits tied to the Democrats have offered little opposition either outside of courtrooms. Yet the courts, both at the state and federal levels, right up to the U.S. Supreme Court, are dominated by the ultra-right.

The result: Many tens of thousands of internal refugees are fleeing dangerous conditions for so-called “safe” states – often the most expensive like California and

New York – which claim to be sanctuaries for persecuted LGBTQ+ people but provide no resources to make housing, health care, or jobs accessible. Millions more are without the resources or ability to flee, trapped under the domination of those who make clear they want to eliminate trans people.

A California activist recently told Struggle-La Lucha about a trans couple he is trying to find housing for. The couple fled Michigan – considered a “safe state” on the legislative front this year – after death threats. The prohibitive cost of housing is a major obstacle to providing refuge for them and other trans refugees.

Already, the Democratic Party and its social media operatives have started a campaign of attacks on LGBTQ+ people who criticize Biden’s inaction on trans rights and participation in genocide in Gaza, telling people they are “supporting Donald Trump” and threatening them with the prospect of being rounded up and imprisoned – or worse – for opposing Biden.

Who benefits?

Behind the coordinated nationwide campaign to dehumanize and eradicate trans people are wealthy capitalists who see the growing fascist movement as a guarantee of their grip on power.

In this time of deepening political, economic, and military crisis for U.S. imperialism worldwide, there is no incentive among any section of the ruling class to oppose the politics of divide and conquer taken to the extreme.

Recently, the [New York Times ran an article](#) on the role of the Claremont Institute, one of the well-funded think tanks coordinating the attacks on trans rights, abortion, diversity programs, and “critical race theory” – ironic, given the Times’ role in disseminating and normalizing anti-trans and anti-affirmative action propaganda. This and similar media exposes never touch on the underlying systemic roots of the

crisis.

The whole capitalist class and its political institutions, including the corporate media, are deeply committed to keeping workers and other parts of the population fighting against each other rather than the profit system that exploits us.

The [Coalition to Protect Trans Lives](#), organizers of last October's National March to Protect Trans Youth & Speakout for Trans Rights, released this statement:

"Last Oct. 7, we brought together hundreds of people from across the U.S. on the front lines in Orlando, Florida. We said then that Orlando was just a first step toward building an independent fight-back movement in the spirit of Stonewall, AIDS activism, and the Civil Rights Movement.

"This election year presents special challenges to our efforts to build an independent grassroots movement. There will be enormous pressure (in fact, it's already begun) to drop every form of protest in favor of electoral campaigning for 'lesser evil' candidates, many of whom have already proven their utter indifference to trans rights.

"But we believe it is necessary to persevere and continue the struggle in the streets – because whoever is in the White House and Congress next year, we will need to continue the fight for our very lives and the existence of our community.

"We also remain committed to breaking down barriers and uniting with other communities that are under attack – Palestinian, Arab and Muslim people targeted for challenging the genocide in Gaza; immigrants and refugees facing execution at the U.S.-Mexico border; pregnant people whose lives and well-being are sacrificed to the altar of repressive abortion bans; workers whose access to healthcare, food, and housing are being stripped away by attacks on Medicaid, SNAP, and other social programs; and so many more."The Coalition to Protect Trans Lives will hold an

initial organizing call for 2024 on Wednesday, Feb. 7. Readers who want to participate are urged to contact info@protecttranskidsmarch.org or fill out the interest form at ProtectTransKidsMarch.org for details.

