

# 48 States Allow Gay Conversion "Therapy" For Minors

Most medical professionals and organizations, including the American Psychiatric Association, the American Medical Association and the American Psychological Association, agree that conversion or reparative "therapy," or the practice of trying to change sexual orientation, is ineffective and harmful. However, only two states ban state-licensed therapists from attempting to "cure" minors of their orientation, even though the practice has proven harmful to those who have undergone it, and lesbian, gay and bisexual youth are already at an increased risk for depression and suicide.

## Reparative therapy bans for minors legislation by state, as of July 1, 2014

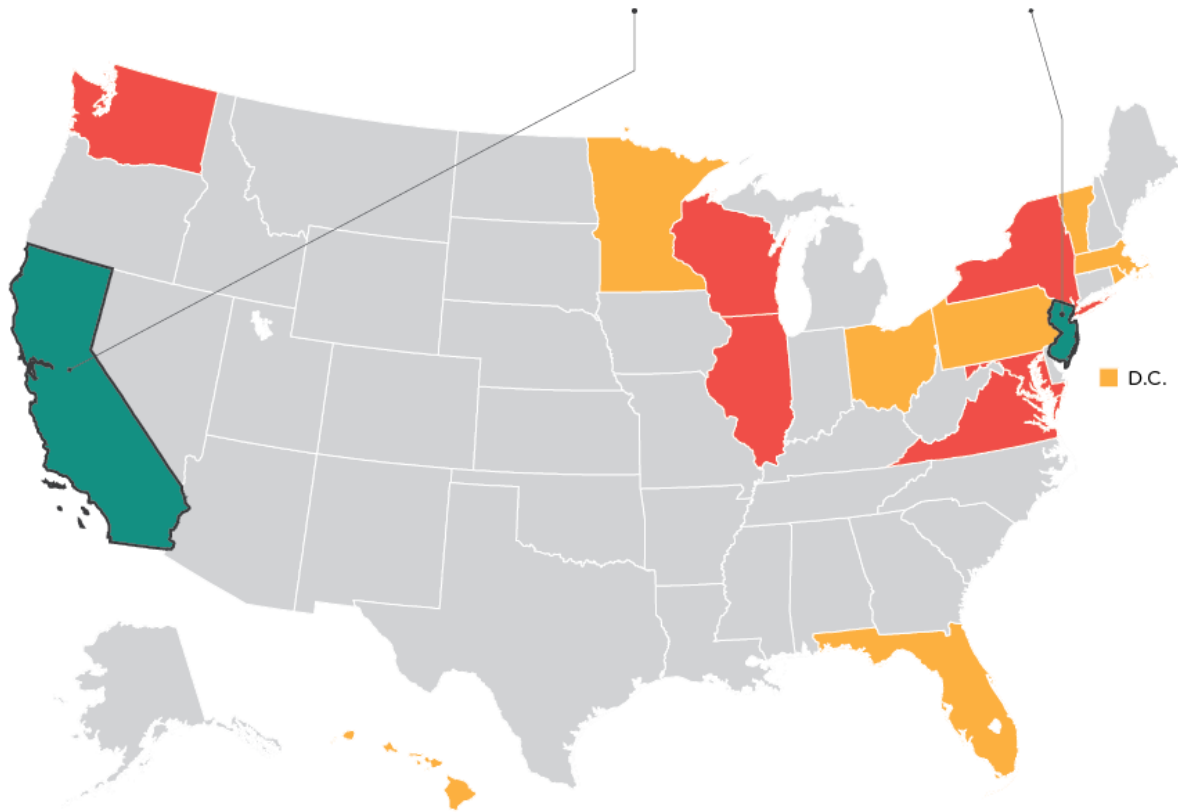
- Law against reparative therapy for minors
- Legislation introduced
- Legislation introduced but failed
- No legislation
- Law challenged, but upheld

### CALIFORNIA

The first state reparative therapy ban for minors was signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown on September 19, 2012. It was held constitutional by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals on August 29, 2013. The Supreme Court declined to hear a challenge to the ban on June 30, 2014, clearing the way for enforcement.

### NEW JERSEY

Governor Chris Christie signed a law on August 19, 2013 banning reparative therapy for minors. The ban was held constitutional by the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey on November 8, 2013.

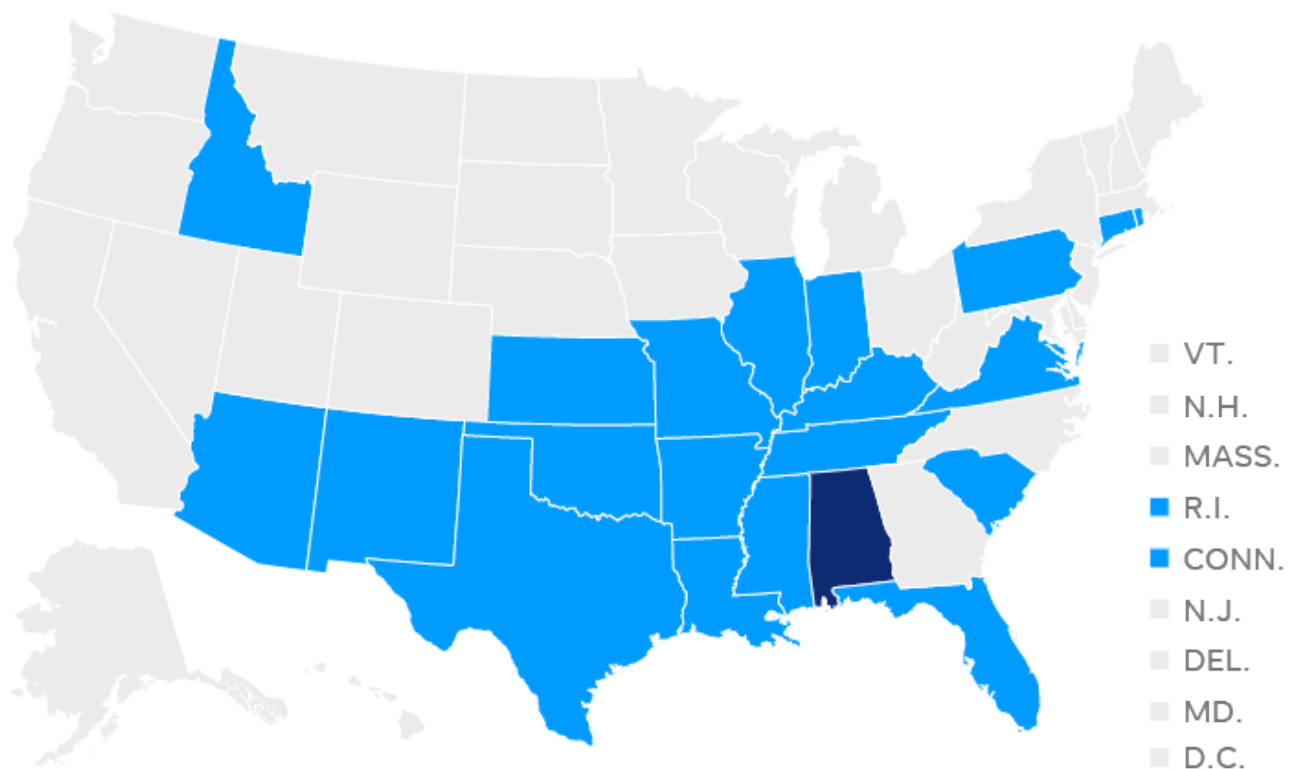


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## States with broad religious exemption laws

These laws allow people, churches, non-profits and businesses to cite religious beliefs as a reason to not comply with a law.

- State has constitutional religious exemption law
- State has statutory religious exemption law
- State has no broad religious exemption law



SOURCE Movement Advancement Project

Frank Pompa/USA TODAY

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## **For trans activists in the U.S., recent setbacks temper long-term hopes**

*CTV News*, David Crary, November 19, 2019

NEW YORK -- Amid their annual vigils for transgender homicide victims, trans rights activists in the U.S. are trying to maintain long-term optimism even as many hard-won protections are under threat.

Just a few weeks ago, President Donald Trump's administration argued before the Supreme Court that employers should be allowed to fire workers because they are transgender. The administration also has moved to revoke health care discrimination protections for trans people, rescind trans-friendly guidelines for students' access to school bathrooms, and sharply restrict trans people's ability to serve in the military.

"These government actions send a dangerous message to transgender and non-transgender people alike that trans people should exist outside the law and be subjected to subhuman treatment," said Chase Strangio, a trans rights attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union.

He is on the legal team representing Aimee Stephens, a transgender woman fired by a Michigan funeral home, in the pending Supreme Court case.

Strangio and other activists contend that political efforts to roll back transgender rights contribute, at least indirectly, to the persistent phenomenon of anti-trans vitriol and violence.

They note that in the FBI's latest hate crimes report, issued last week, the number of trans people who were targeted rose from 119 in 2017 to 160 in 2018 -- a 34% increase. Advocacy groups say 22 transgender or gender-nonconforming people have been victims of fatal violence so far this year; they will be honoured in Wednesday's annual Transgender Day of Remembrance events.

The year-to-date death toll of 22 is close to the annual average for recent years, according to the Human Rights Campaign, a national LGBTQ rights organization that on Monday released a report tallying 157 violent deaths of transgender people in the U.S. since 2013, about 80% of them trans women of colour.

"Some of these murders are explicitly motivated by hate, but all of them exist in context of systemic barriers that are influenced by hate," said Sarah McBride, a trans activist who is the Human Rights Campaign's national press secretary. "The discrimination that trans people face pushes them out of a stable life and into circumstances where they're more likely to face violence."

During Barack Obama's presidency, the cause of transgender rights advanced on numerous fronts, notably with policy changes enabling trans people to serve openly in the military. Trump, via a tweet in 2017, vowed to reverse that policy and ban trans people from military service altogether.

To a large extent, the ban remains in place, despite lawsuits challenging it, said Shannon Minter, who waged some of that litigation as legal director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights.

"Being transgender is now a bar to enlistment and a ground for discharge for those already serving," said Minter, a transgender man. "The only trans people permitted to serve openly are those who came out under the prior open service policy."

The administration and various conservative advocacy groups "are attempting to demonize transgender people for short-term political gain," Minter said, but he believes the tactic eventually will backfire.

"The more politicians and organizations attack transgender people ... the more they are ultimately helping to raise the visibility of these important issues and giving trans people an opportunity to show the public who they really are," Minter said.

Unquestionably, issues of gender identity can provoke visceral public debate.

In Connecticut, for example, three girls who competed in high school track filed a federal discrimination complaint in June saying the state's inclusive policy on transgender athletes has cost them top finishes and possibly college scholarships.

"We all know the outcome of the race before it even starts; it's demoralizing," said Selina Soule, of Glastonbury High School, after losing a 55-meter dash to a transgender girl.

In Texas, top Republican politicians became engaged in a battle between divorced parents over their 7-year-old child's gender identity.

The mother says the child, identified as a boy at birth, now identifies as a girl and prefers to be called a female name. The father says the child acts like a boy around him and launched a website in which he pleads for help to "save" his child.

At one point, Attorney General Ken Paxton asked that the mother be investigated for possible child abuse. The Federalist, a conservative online magazine, ran a column by gay conservative Chad Felix Greene calling on Republican-controlled legislatures to outlaw gender transition medical procedures for minors.

Some trans rights activists view the controversies over sports participation and parental decisions as evidence that trans people have become a target of choice for social conservatives who failed to stop the legalization of same-sex marriage.

"We have to be wary any time an entire segment of a population is being used as a political wedge to divide people," said activist Gillian Branstetter. "It's done by a desperate group of folks upset they lost the marriage equality fight and looking for a new fundraising tool."

Branstetter spoke with The Associated Press on Friday, her last day as a spokeswoman for the National Center for Transgender Equality. Its staff shrank from more than 20 to less than 10 amid recent disputes over its leadership, staff diversity and a unionization drive.

For all the setbacks, trans rights activists have had recent occasions to celebrate, ranging from the critical acclaim for "Pose," a TV series featuring several trans characters, to the Nov. 5 reelection of trans legislator Danica Roem to Virginia's House of Delegates.

Andy Marra, executive director of the Transgender Defence and Legal Education Fund, said there are now 23 openly trans elected officials nationwide. She noted that Georgia's state university system recently agreed to end a policy barring its transgender employees from coverage for trans-related health care.

In Congress, the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives passed a bill that would extend a wide range of nondiscrimination protections to trans people. It is given virtually no chance of enactment while Republicans control the Senate.

"The legislative, judicial and executive possibilities are constrained at the federal level for the immediate future," said the ACLU's Strangio. "But as always, our communities have shown

tremendous resilience and the ability to create magic and beauty out of so little."

About 1.4 million Americans identify as transgender, according to the Williams Institute, a think-tank at the UCLA School of Law specializing in LGBT issues.