



July 19, 2023

**Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities Members
Denounce Attacks on LGBTQI+ Rights, Call for Comprehensive Non-
Discrimination, Care and Accessibility Measures**

Washington, DC – The undersigned members of the Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities (CCD) join in solidarity with the transgender and broader LGBTQI+ community to denounce discrimination against LGBTQI+ people, including those with disabilities. We believe that every person, including all members of the LGBTQI+ community and people with disabilities, have a right to bodily autonomy, self-determination, and equal access to healthcare, educational and employment opportunities, community-based services, and protections.

In 2023, more than 20 bills¹ were introduced in the U.S. Congress that would restrict the rights of transgender and other LGBTQI+ people, including in proposed appropriations bills. Over 500 anti-LGBTQI+ bills have been introduced in state legislatures—a new record, according to the American Civil Liberties Union²—and dozens have been signed into law. Lawmakers are pushing to ban access to gender-affirming health care, including for youth, and to deny rights to LGBTQI+ students.³ Some of these measures have explicitly targeted disabled LGBTQI+ people, including autistic LGBTQI+ people and those with mental health disabilities. LGBTQI+ people are statistically more likely to be neurodiverse. This fact should not further deter access to care. Some bills and newly-signed laws also aim to prohibit coverage for care through Medicaid, a program that is the primary insurance coverage for people with disabilities. These bills violate the civil and constitutional rights of LGBTQI+ and disabled persons.

With support and acceptance, transgender and other LGBTQI+ people can thrive; these legislative attacks, on the other hand, foster dangerous hostility against them. Even before this spate of anti-LGBTQI+ bills, transgender people in particular experienced high levels of discrimination and marginalization in social, healthcare, community, and educational settings, with even higher levels for transgender people with disabilities. A study of nearly 28,000 transgender⁴ people found that almost one third of transgender people—including nearly half of transgender people with disabilities—were living in poverty. The poverty rates are higher still for transgender disabled people of color. Similarly, one-third of transgender people, including more than 40 percent of transgender disabled people, experienced mistreatment from health providers, including denial of care, harassment, and abuse, with particularly high rates among transgender disabled people of color.

Research has consistently shown high rates of disability among LGBTQI+ people. But many disabled LGBTQI+ individuals—especially transgender people with intellectual, developmental, and mental health disabilities—face a persistent narrative that their identities are less legitimate, on the grounds that their disability precludes them from fully understanding their own sexual orientation or gender. This dangerous narrative, which has been used to justify much anti-LGBTQI+ legislation, is based on the false assumption that disabled people are less deserving of bodily autonomy, self-determination, and respect. We strongly oppose any suggestion that LGBTQI+ disabled people are less capable or less worthy of full self-determination.

The undersigned strongly oppose any regulations or legislation that perpetuates injustices and hinders the full integration, acceptance, and inclusion of LGBTQI+ individuals, including those with disabilities, in all aspects of society. We commit to advocating on behalf of LGBTQI+ members of the disability community. We urge policymakers at all levels to reject these bills and, instead, enact comprehensive measures that ban discrimination and promote equality, non-discrimination, and accessibility for all.

Access Ready

American Association of People with Disabilities

American Civil Liberties Union

American Music Therapy Association

American Occupational Therapy Association

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Association of University Centers on Disabilities

Autism Society of America

Autistic Self Advocacy Network

Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

Caring Across Generations

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

Center for Learner Equity

Center for Public Representation

CommunicationFIRST

Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates

Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund

Epilepsy Foundation

Justice in Aging

National Center for Learning Disabilities

National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment (National PLACE)

National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)

National Health Law Program

National Respite Coalition

National Women's Law Center

RespectAbility

SAGE

The Advocacy Institute

The Arc of the United States

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The Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities (CCD) is the largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for Federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society free from racism, ableism, sexism, and xenophobia, as well as LGBTQI+ based discrimination and religious intolerance.

¹ Trans Formations Project (2023). National Legislation. Available at <https://www.transformationsproject.org/national-bills>

² American Civil Liberties Union (2023). Mapping Attacks on LGBTQ Rights in U.S. State Legislatures. Available at <https://www.aclu.org/legislative-attacks-on-lgbtq-rights?impact=>

³ Shawna Mizelle (March 18, 2023). In wake of Florida law, additional states seek to restrict certain LGBTQ discussions in schools. *CNN Politics*. Available at <https://www.cnn.com/2023/03/18/politics/lgbtq-school-discussions/index.html>

⁴ National Center for Transgender Equality (2016). The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey. Available at <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf>