

# Anti-LGBTQ+ Year In Review: Policy Recommendations



**There are important steps that lawmakers, law enforcement, social media companies and others can and should take to support LGBTQ+ communities and help counter anti-LGBTQ+ hate.**

**1**

## Prioritize Preventing Violence

We need a whole-of-government approach to address the threat of extremism. The framework that ADL has created — [the PROTECT plan](#) — is a comprehensive plan to mitigate the threat posed by domestic extremism while protecting civil rights and civil liberties. That includes ensuring that the authorities and resources the government uses to address violent threats are proportionate to the risk of the lethality of those threats.

We urge Congress to increase resources available for civil society to address domestic violent extremism, such as the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP), which provides non-profits with the capacity to increase their defense against violent threats, including physical security and cybersecurity capacity and coordination. Despite recent increases in the NSGP program, as extremism threats continue to rise, the need continues to be greater than the resources provided. For the FY 2022 grants, nearly \$450 million in grant applications were received for this program. At a time of increased vulnerability to threats of hate-motivated violence by domestic extremists, especially against LGBTQ+ individuals and centers, Congress should significantly increase funding for non-profit organizations that government and law enforcement authorities objectively determine are at high risk of attack.

**2**

## Speak Out Against Anti-LGBTQ+ Hate and Extremism

Public officials and law enforcement authorities must use their bully pulpit to speak out against all manifestations of hate and extremism, including anti-LGBTQ+ hate. Simply put, leaders must make it absolutely clear that bigotry of any kind is unacceptable. Strong messages like these can have a meaningful deterrent effect and help counter dangerous and harmful narratives that may otherwise gain traction.

**3**

## Improve Anti-LGBTQ+ Hate Crime and Bias Incident Data Collection

According to the most recent FBI data available, in 2021, there were [10,840 reported hate crime incidents](#) across the country, the highest number in more than two decades. Approximately 20% of single-bias hate crime incidents were crimes involving sexual orientation, gender, and gender identity-bias. Despite these record-high statistics, we know that hate crimes and hate incidents, including anti-LGBTQ+ hate crimes and incidents, are still vastly underreported. We cannot develop a truly comprehensive approach to preventing and addressing hate crimes and bias incidents without complete and reliable data. We urge greater investment in community-based organizations that are already working to ensure more robust data collection. And, we urge Congress to evaluate options for making hate crime reporting mandatory by all law enforcement agencies, such as by leveraging federal criminal justice grants provided to state and local law enforcement agencies through the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program.

4

## Improve Government, Law Enforcement and Tech Platform Responses to Online Hate

Online hate and extremism have increased dramatically [in recent years](#). In response, ADL has proposed the [REPAIR plan](#) to fight hate in the digital world. We support [legislative reform](#) to close gaps in laws that deny victims redress for serious acts of online harassment and abuse like doxing, swatting, and non-consensual distribution of intimate imagery. We must provide [better recourse for victims](#) and targets of online hate and harassment, such as through cyberhate victim resource centers. [Law enforcement](#) needs to be trained in how to recognize cybercrimes and be made aware of the tools available to them to bring perpetrators to justice.

We urge social media companies to take the following critically important steps:<sup>[1]</sup>

- [Promote User Safety by Increasing User Controls](#)

Platforms need to give users agency and control over the representation of their identity details such as name, gender identity, former identity, pronouns, etc. These measures are designed to safeguard against detrimental practices like misgendering and deadnaming, to uphold privacy, and to defend against other potential forms of harassment and abuse. Through these steps, platforms can promote a safer and more respectful online environment for all users.

- [Maintain and Enforce Strong Policies Against Anti-LGBTQ+ Hate and Abuse](#)

Targeted misgendering and deadnaming, propagating the anti-LGBTQ+ ‘groomer’ narrative, advocating for the dangerous practice of so-called ‘conversion therapy,’ spreading defamatory stereotypes, promoting harmful anti-LGBTQ+ conspiracy theories, and using derogatory language or slurs are all damaging forms of identity-based harassment and abuse that directly harm the LGBTQ+ community and jeopardize their safety, both online and off. These behaviors encourage hatred, discrimination, and rhetoric that often escalates into real-world violence. Platforms must maintain and enforce their policies prohibiting such hate in order to protect the safety of LGBTQ+ users while making sure not to suppress legitimate LGBTQ+ speech and expression.

5

## Promote Anti-Bias Education Programs in K-12 Education

Congress and the Department of Education should increase federal funding for inclusive school climate practices and anti-bias education. Parents and educators should take advantage of the [wealth of online resources available](#) on the topic of countering hate and bias in K-12 schools. Schools should be directed to implement properly crafted anti-bullying, cyberbullying and harassment education and training initiatives, to ensure that administrators and educators [understand their legal obligations](#). And every elementary and secondary school should promote activities that celebrate and reflect our nation’s diversity – and regularly integrate anti-bias and anti-hate content in their curricula.

6

## Oppose Harmful and Discriminatory Anti-LGBTQ+ Proposals

As of May 2023, [over 540 anti-LGBTQ+ bills](#) have been introduced in state legislatures, including 220 bills specifically targeting transgender and non-binary people. These bills are dangerous and [discriminatory](#) and should be opposed. At the same time, [only 23 states](#) have non-discrimination protections that explicitly protect LGBTQ+ people. This reality further underscores the critical need for the Equality Act (H.R. 5/S. 393) – federal legislation that would explicitly protect the LGBTQ+ community from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, housing, credit, education, public spaces and services, federally funded programs and jury service. The House of Representatives has already passed the Equality Act; it is now up to the Senate to act.

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While all ADL policy recommendations for social media platforms are designed to protect online users from the pervasive threats of hate, harassment, and extremism, the policy recommendations above are uniquely crafted to address pervasive threats to the well-being and safety of the LGBTQ+ community.

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