



Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs

Statement on the Federal Attacks on Transgender Marylanders

The Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs was established to assess the challenges facing LGBTQIA+ communities and to develop recommendations and best practices that promote inclusion. This mandate is more urgent now than ever as transgender Marylanders face an escalating wave of federal policies that threaten their rights, dignity, and well-being.

Over the past several weeks, the Trump administration has launched an all-out assault on transgender Americans through a series of executive actions and policy rollbacks designed to strip transgender people, especially youth and service members, of their rights, dignity, and access to essential healthcare. These attacks are not just political maneuvers; they are calculated efforts to erase transgender people from public life, endangering their health, safety, and ability to thrive.

Challenges Facing Transgender Marylanders Under the New Administration

Since January 2025, several executive orders and additional federal actions have directly targeted transgender Americans, threatening their ability to access healthcare, receive fair treatment in schools, serve in the military, and seek refuge in Maryland from hostile states.

Maryland law continues to provide robust protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. State law ensures access to gender-affirming healthcare, employment protections, educational accommodations, and legal recourse for those facing discrimination. Additionally, the Maryland Attorney General's Office recently released updated [guidance on LGBTQIA+ protections under Maryland law](#) reaffirming that these rights remain enforceable despite shifting federal policies.

However, these protections are not absolute, and federal policies continue to create real and urgent challenges for transgender Marylanders. Despite Maryland's commitment to inclusion, hostile federal actions threaten to undermine progress, weaken enforcement, and embolden discrimination. Below are some of the most pressing challenges under the new administration:

1. Attacks on Transition-Related Healthcare

- The Trump Administration issued an executive order attempting to prohibit transition-related care for minors nationwide.

- The order denies federal funding to providers offering transition-related care to minors, even if the funds are used for unrelated medical services. This impacts hospitals, universities, insurance companies, and Medicare/Medicaid providers across Maryland.
- The order is currently blocked by a temporary restraining order issued by a federal judge in Maryland, but the final outcome is uncertain, and there are concerns the administration may attempt to withhold federal funds unilaterally.

2. Restrictions on Trans Youth in Schools

- Title IX reinterpretations could allow schools to deny trans students access to bathrooms, sports teams, and gender-affirming accommodations.
- Federal agencies have weakened guidance on anti-bullying policies, leaving trans students more vulnerable to harassment.
- New rules encourage forced outing policies, which put trans youth at risk of family rejection, homelessness, and violence.

3. Discharges and Discrimination Against Trans Service Members and Veterans

- The Trump Administration issued an executive order to reinstate a transgender military ban and directed the Department of Defense (DoD) to eliminate transgender-inclusive policies across all branches of the military.
- The DoD followed up with policy guidance to implement the ban, mandating immediate separation of transgender servicemembers and a cancellation of all gender-affirming care.
- Loss of VA-covered transition-related care for trans veterans which will cut off critical care, further exacerbating health disparities among those who served their country.

4. Federal Rollbacks on Workplace Protections and Surveillance Targeting LGBTQIA+ People

- The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has stopped investigating claims of LGBTQ+ workplace discrimination, despite the Supreme Court's ruling in *Bostock v. Clayton County*, which affirmed that discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity is unconstitutional. This failure to enforce civil rights protections leaves LGBTQIA+ workers, including transgender service members transitioning to civilian careers, without federal recourse in cases of employment discrimination.
- The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has quietly removed sexual orientation and gender identity from its list of protected characteristics that cannot be used as a sole basis for domestic surveillance. This raises concerns about the privacy and safety of LGBTQIA+ individuals, particularly transgender people, who may now face increased targeting and monitoring solely because of their gender identity.

- These federal policy rollbacks create uncertainty and fear for transgender Marylanders seeking employment, safety, and stability while also emboldening state-level efforts to weaken LGBTQIA+ protections.

5. Risks for Trans Refugees Seeking Safety in Maryland

- Maryland has positioned itself as a sanctuary for transgender individuals, but federal pressure on states threatens funding for trans-inclusive services.
- Maryland's legal protections must be strengthened to prevent trans medical data from being shared with hostile states.

6. Federal and State Attacks on Transgender Participation in Public Life

- The U.S. State Department has taken action to ban transgender athletes from entering the country by claiming that identifying as transgender and having government-issued documents reflecting one's gender identity amounts to fraud. This move further stigmatizes trans people and sets a dangerous precedent for restricting identity-based rights.
- A Republican-led effort to implement a nationwide ban on transgender girls and young women from competing in sports aligned with their gender identity stalled in the Senate, but the push for federal restrictions signals ongoing efforts to undermine transgender inclusion in athletics.
- These actions at the federal level have emboldened state legislators, such as in Texas, where a bill has been introduced to make living in alignment with one's gender identity a felony. Such policies fuel discrimination, increase barriers to public participation, and contribute to a climate of hostility toward transgender people across the country.

These policies create instability and fear, particularly among those who already face disproportionate barriers to healthcare, employment, education, and housing while facing increased risks of discrimination, harassment, and violence. For many, these attacks are not just policy changes, they are matters of life and death.

Maryland has long been a leader in LGBTQIA+ inclusion, and at this critical moment, clear and decisive action is needed to ensure that our state remains a place where all transgender people can live freely, safely, and with dignity.

Call to Action: Strengthening Protections and Support for Transgender Marylanders

The Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs urges swift action at every level of state government to reinforce Maryland's commitment to equity, inclusion, and the safety of transgender communities.

1. Affirm Maryland's Commitment to Transgender Rights

Public affirmation of Maryland's steadfast commitment to transgender residents is vital. Clear statements reinforcing existing state protections and rejecting discriminatory federal actions sends a powerful message of support to a community that is experiencing heightened distress and fear.

- Leaders in the public and private sectors at all levels need to make full-throated declarations that transgender, nonbinary, and intersex youth, adults, and families will be protected and supported in Maryland.
- Silence in times of crisis is heard as indifference and the cost of inaction is measured in lives.

2. Increase Funding and Capacity to Support Maryland's Transgender Community

Maryland is a sanctuary state without sanctuary funding. With the rising number of transgender individuals and families seeking safety and support in Maryland, it is critical to expand state resources and infrastructure to meet these growing needs. We urge:

- Expand funding and capacity for state agencies, including the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs, to support constituents, identify and develop resources, and coordinate interagency responses to ensure Maryland remains a leader in transgender inclusion.
- Increased state funding for transgender support services, including mental health care, housing assistance, veteran and service members services, and legal aid for those affected by federal rollbacks.
- Investment in community-based organizations that serve transgender Marylanders, ensuring access to direct services, crisis response, and advocacy efforts.

3. Strengthen Healthcare Protections and Access

Federal attempts to restrict access to gender-affirming care make it imperative that Maryland fortifies existing protections. Immediate steps include:

- Exploring funding mechanisms to support providers offering gender-affirming care, particularly in response to potential federal funding restrictions.
- Challenging federal action in the courts, both on behalf of Maryland state institutions that would be denied funding and of the many Marylanders who will be directly affected by these cuts.
- Ensuring Medicaid and state employee health plans provide comprehensive gender-affirming care, closing existing gaps.
- Updating the Maryland Insurance Administration's regulations to prevent discriminatory denials of coverage and open an investigation into denials of coverage for transition-related care to determine if denials are being made in a discriminatory manner.

4. Safeguard Transgender Youth in Schools

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) recently updated their guidance for [Safe and Supportive Schools for All Students: Creating Inclusive Spaces for LGBTQIA+ Youth](#) along with their [Nondiscrimination Guidelines for Transgender Youth](#). Additionally, MSDE has published guidance on [Bullying Preventing and Reporting](#), [TitleIX Guidance and Compliance](#), and [Nondiscrimination in Education Procedure](#). Transgender students must remain protected in Maryland schools, regardless of federal shifts. Ensuring that:

- School districts continue to receive clear guidance affirming the rights of transgender students, including protections from forced outing policies and discrimination.
- Anti-bullying and inclusion policies remain strong, particularly in response to increased harassment in the wake of national rhetoric.
- Extracurricular and athletic opportunities remain accessible, preventing harmful exclusions from school activities.

5. Enhance Protections for Transgender Service Members and Veterans

Maryland is home to thousands of active-duty service members, veterans, and their families, many of whom are directly impacted by federal actions and restrictions on transgender military personnel. The Governor and the [Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families \(DVMF\)](#) have affirmed support for transgender service members and veterans. DVMF provides resources and support services for LGBTQIA+ veterans, including employment assistance, healthcare access, legal aid, and emergency financial support. However, additional proactive measures should be taken to:

- Guarantee healthcare for transgender veterans, transgender family members of active service members and veterans, regardless of federal policy shifts.
- Support service members who may face discharge or workplace discrimination as a result of restrictive federal policies.
- Provide employment and housing assistance for forcibly discharged trans service members stationed in Maryland.

6. Advance Statewide Protections for Transgender Marylanders

At a time when the federal government is rolling back transgender rights, Maryland must continue to lead by strengthening legal protections and advancing policies that affirm the dignity and rights of transgender people. We urge:

- The General Assembly to pass the [Birth Certificate Modernization Act](#), which is the only trans-specific affirming legislation this year, that ensures transgender Marylanders can accurately update identity documents, access legal protections, and navigate state systems without unnecessary barriers.
- The Moore/Miller Administration to use executive orders to protect LGBTQIA+ Marylanders, including formalizing the Commission's [recommendations and best](#)

[practices for state agencies](#) to ensure equitable policies and enforcement of protections against discrimination.

- A commitment to proactively combat anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation, ensuring that Maryland remains a national leader in LGBTQIA+ inclusion and does not allow harmful policies to gain traction at the state or local levels.

A Moment for Leadership

Maryland has always been a state that values fairness, dignity, and inclusion. As federal attacks on transgender rights escalate, our leadership must meet this moment with clarity and action. Now is the time to reinforce Maryland's commitment to equity, not only in words but in policy and practice.

To every transgender, nonbinary, Two Spirit, gender diverse, and intersex Marylander: You are seen. You are valued. You are not alone. The Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs remains committed to working alongside community leaders, advocates, and policymakers to ensure that Maryland remains a safe and affirming home for LGBTQIA+ communities.

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The Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs, created by the Maryland General Assembly, works to serve LGBTQIA+ Marylanders by galvanizing community voices, researching and addressing challenges, and advocating for policies that advance equity and inclusion. The Commission envisions a Maryland where all LGBTQIA+ people can live full and authentic lives. As a vital resource, the Commission collaborates with public officials, agencies, and community partners to ensure the rights and dignity of LGBTQIA+ Marylanders are protected and respected. Learn more at <https://goci.maryland.gov/lgbtq/> and connect with us at LGBTQIA@maryland.gov.