# The fightback against Florida’s anti-gay measures begins



In a demonstration of collective activism, over 400 volunteers gathered in Tallahassee [pictured] for the Pride At The Capitol Kick-Off, marking the third week of the legislative session in Florida. The event aimed to combat a series of proposed legislative measures perceived as detrimental to LGBTQ+ rights. Their presence was reported to have significantly impacted ongoing discussions regarding these bills, with the diverse coalition of participants submitting more than 1,000 comment cards in opposition to the legislation under review.

The gathering kicked off with a press conference in the Capitol Rotunda, where notable LGBTQ+ lawmakers, including Senator Carlos Guillermo Smith, Representative Michele Rayner, and Pro-equality advocates such as Representative Anna V. Eskamani, addressed a packed audience. Stratton Pollitzer, Deputy Director of Equality Florida, and Angelique Godwin, Director of Transgender Equality, emphasised the importance of unity in the face of what they termed extremist legislation. "They'll have to go through us," Pollitzer asserted, sending a strong message to lawmakers about the significance of their movement.

Several proposed bills were at the forefront of the discussions, including HB 1571/SB 420, aimed at prohibiting local governments from implementing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies. If passed, the legislation would also place local officials at risk of removal for enacting DEI-related initiatives. This legislation progressed out of the Senate Community Affairs Committee on a party-line vote, prompting concern among equality advocates who provided testimony against it. Despite amendments to the bill, it continues to restrict community-level response capabilities, increasing the scrutiny on local governance.

Another contentious piece of legislation is the HB 731/SB 1710, which seeks to defund DEI initiatives within state agencies and prevent state contractors from allocating funds for related purposes. It was also met with significant opposition from volunteers who gathered to voice their concerns regarding the bill's implications on state governance.

A particularly controversial proposal is the "Don't Say Gay or Trans at Work 2.0" (HB 1495/SB 440), which would regulate pronoun usage in the workplace and insulate employees from repercussions for anti-trans harassment. While the bill was initially scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee, it was temporarily postponed due to a strong showing of opposition from advocates.

Additionally, the Pride Flag Ban Bill (HB 75/SB 100) proposes that government buildings may not raise flags representing any "political viewpoint," a measure driven largely by protests against visibility for LGBTQ+ pride. This legislation is also slated for a hearing in the coming days.

The event additionally highlighted the ongoing challenges faced by transgender and nonbinary citizens in Florida, showcased in the 2nd Annual Let Us Live March, which drew a large crowd advocating for transgender rights and against the targeting of these communities through legislation. Speakers at the event, including Senator Shevrin Jones and Representative Dotie Joseph, reinforced the urgency of addressing these legislative threats.

Throughout the kick-off event, the sentiment resonating among participants was one of resilience and determination. The continuous threats to LGBTQ+ rights at both federal and state levels have prompted advocates to rally for a comprehensive defence against proposed measures. The ongoing efforts aim to not only halt harmful legislation but to innovative pathways towards preserving and expanding rights for all individuals within the LGBTQ+ community in Florida.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://eqfl.org/PATC> - This URL supports the claim about the Pride At The Capitol event and Equality Florida's efforts to combat anti-LGBTQ+ bills during the 2025 legislative session in Florida. It details how Equality Florida is actively engaging with lawmakers throughout the session.
* <https://www.keshetonline.org/event/3-18-pride-at-the-capital-with-equality-florida/> - This URL provides additional information about the Pride at the Capitol event, including its purpose to advocate for LGBTQ+ rights and meet with lawmakers. It also highlights the urgent need for collective action in safeguarding these rights.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This URL refers to the source article, which provides an overview of the Pride At The Capitol Kick-Off event and its impact on legislative discussions regarding proposed LGBTQ+ bills in Florida.
* <https://www.eqfl.org> - This URL offers general information about Equality Florida and its advocacy work, which includes organizing and participating in events like Pride At The Capitol to protect and promote LGBTQ+ rights.