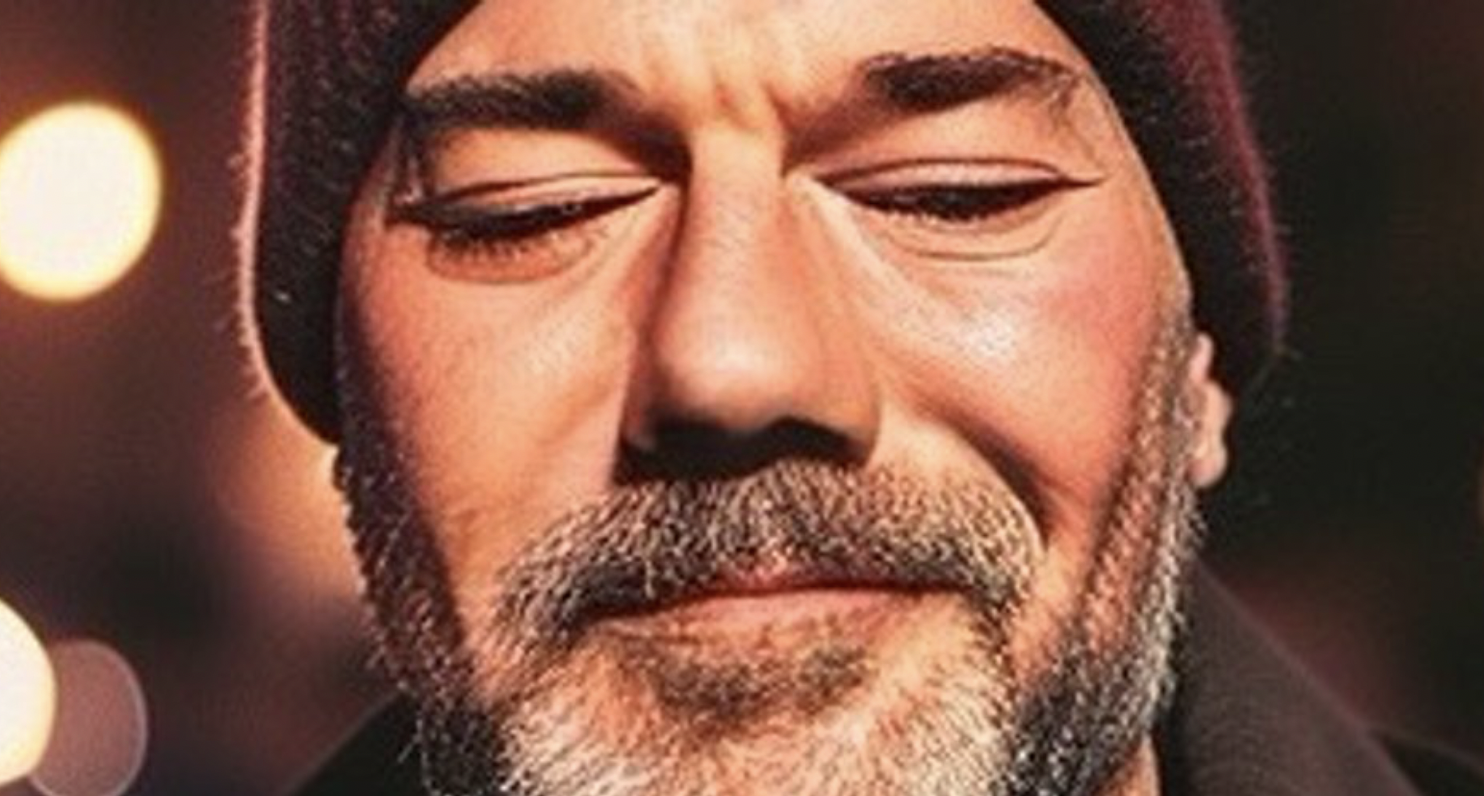
# Has the gay rights movement gone too far? Andrew Sullivan thinks it has



Andrew Sullivan, a prominent gay British conservative Catholic, is reflecting critically on the current trajectory of the gay rights movement. Truly a pioneer, Sullivan first championed gay marriage in 1989 when such a notion was widely dismissed, even within the gay community itself. At the time, his proposal for recognising lifelong committed relationships in the light of social and family acceptance was seen as an extremist idea. The cultural and legal landscape in the US was harsh—gays in the military faced discharge or court-martial, and coming out in the media risked professional and personal backlash. Despite these barriers, Sullivan’s vision eventually became mainstream. After the 2015 Supreme Court ruling that legalised same-sex marriage nationwide, public opinion shifted dramatically, with polls indicating about 70% of Americans now support the institution. Gays are openly serving at all levels of government, marking a civil rights victory that, by Sullivan’s own measure, is decisive and comprehensive.

Yet, Sullivan now argues the movement has "gone off the rails," as it pushes beyond what was once understood as a battle for equal rights into the contentious terrain of gender identity politics. His concerns centre on the shift from traditional distinctions between men and women to the elevation of 'gender identity', particularly regarding support for gender-altering surgeries for minors—a policy opposed by approximately 80% of the public—and the controversy over transgender women competing in women's sports. This shift, Sullivan suggests, risks alienating allies and fragmenting public consensus. His critique is not a rejection of transgender rights per se; he states unequivocally that he has always supported civil rights for transgender individuals. Rather, he worries about what he sees as an overreach that politicizes and endangers the movement’s broader goals.

Furthermore, Sullivan highlights the intolerance within the movement toward dissent, where individuals who question prevailing gender ideology face social shaming and exclusion. He reveals that many gay men, trans people, and lesbians privately share his discomfort but feel silenced. Sullivan warns that involving children in these debates too forcefully could provoke harmful stereotypes of grooming and abuse, a fear rooted in historical prejudices against the LGBTQ+ community.

Critics have responded sharply to Sullivan’s position, accusing him of embodying a more conservative, assimilationist stance that prioritizes mainstream acceptance at the expense of more radical diversity within the community. Some argue his views risk marginalising those who fall outside traditional or normative frameworks of sexuality and gender. Others note that his libertarian approach to the movement, focusing on freedom of speech and tolerance for opposing views—including opposition to some anti-discrimination laws—may limit the movement’s progress in protecting vulnerable groups. Sullivan himself has expressed concern that the current LGBT movement is increasingly resembling the religious right in its treatment of dissenters, citing incidents like the forced resignation of Mozilla’s CEO Brendan Eich for his past political beliefs as indicative of a troubling intolerance.

This internal tension reflects a longstanding split within the LGBTQ+ activism landscape, between assimilationists who seek integration into mainstream society and radical activists advocating for broader social justice reforms that address systemic marginalisation. Sullivan’s emphasis on winning legal equality and societal acceptance through measured advocacy contrasts with the more confrontational strategies of other factions that aim to transform societal norms itself.

In interviews, Sullivan has also expressed a desire for the gay community to be understood beyond the confines of sexual identity and activism. He critiques the sexualisation of gay culture and champions friendship and social bonds as foundational to gay identity, positioning himself as an advocate for gay rights without subscribing wholly to traditional gay activism narratives.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.foxnews.com/media/why-andrew-sullivan-says-gay-rights-movement-gone-off-rails> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.foxnews.com/media/why-andrew-sullivan-says-gay-rights-movement-gone-off-rails> - In this article, Andrew Sullivan, a gay, British conservative Catholic, reflects on the evolution of the gay rights movement. He recalls his 1989 advocacy for gay marriage, which was initially met with resistance. Sullivan discusses the Supreme Court's 2015 decision legalising same-sex marriage and the subsequent societal acceptance. However, he expresses concern over the movement's recent direction, particularly the focus on gender identity and transgender issues, which he believes may alienate broader public support.
3. <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/andrew-sullivan-overexposed/> - This article critiques Andrew Sullivan's approach to gay rights, highlighting his tendency to promote a constrained image of homosexuality that aligns with mainstream societal values. It discusses Sullivan's support for same-sex marriage and his opposition to hate crime laws, suggesting that his views may marginalise those who fall outside normative sexual boundaries.
4. <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/close-down-gay-movement/> - This piece examines the internal conflicts within the gay rights movement, focusing on Andrew Sullivan's libertarian stance. It critiques his opposition to anti-discrimination laws and his belief that the movement should be about expanding freedom for everyone, even those with opposing views, suggesting that such positions may hinder the movement's progress.
5. <https://www.mediaite.com/online/andrew-sullivan-worries-lgbt-movement-becoming-like-religious-right/> - Andrew Sullivan expresses concern that the LGBT movement is adopting tactics similar to the religious right, particularly in its response to individuals with opposing views. He criticises the forced resignation of Mozilla CEO Brendan Eich over his past support for Proposition 8, arguing that such actions mirror the intolerance the movement once opposed.
6. <https://monthlyreview.org/2001/05/01/the-queergay-assimilationist-split/> - This article discusses the divide within the gay rights movement between assimilationists, like Andrew Sullivan, and social justice-oriented activists. It critiques Sullivan's support for mainstream acceptance and his dismissal of more radical activism, suggesting that his approach neglects the broader struggles of marginalised groups within the LGBTQ community.