

Here are the restrictions on transgender people that are moving forward in US statehouses

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American Principles Project members give a thumbs-up to representatives after the Texas House of Representatives passes Senate Bill 14 Friday, May 12, 2023, in Austin, Texas. SB14 would ban gender-affirming medical care for transgender children. Credit: Mikala Compton/Austin American-Statesman via AP

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has highlighted efforts by Republican governors and statehouses across the country to embrace proposals limiting the rights of transgender people, signing new restrictions as he moves closer to a presidential bid.

The restrictions are spreading quickly despite criticism from medical groups and advocates who say they are further marginalizing transgender youth and threatening their health.

Here's what's happening:

Florida's restrictions

DeSantis on Wednesday signed bills that ban gender-affirming care for minors, restrict pronoun use in schools and force people to use the bathroom corresponding with their sex assigned at birth in some cases.

DeSantis also signed new restrictions on drag shows that would allow the state to revoke the food and beverage licenses of businesses that admit children to adult performances. The DeSantis administration has moved to pull the liquor licenses of businesses that held drag shows, alleging children were present during lewd displays.

The rules on gender-affirming care also ban the use of state money for the care and place new restrictions on adults seeking treatment. They take effect immediately, along with the drag show restrictions. The bathroom and pronoun restrictions take effect July 1.

DeSantis has advocated for such restrictions, and championed a Florida law that restricts the teaching of sexual orientation and gender identity in public schools. Florida has expanded that prohibition, which critics have dubbed the "Don't Say Gay" law, to all grades.



Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis holds up bills he signed during a bill signing ceremony at the Coastal Community Church at Lighthouse Point, Tuesday, May 16, 2023, in Lighthouse Point, Fla. Credit: AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee

Where bans stand nationally

Hundreds of bills have been proposed this year restricting the rights of transgender people, and LGBTQ+ advocates say they've seen a record number of such measures in statehouses.

At least 17 states have enacted laws restricting or banning gender-affirming care for minors: Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Mississippi, Montana, North

Dakota, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah, South Dakota and West Virginia. Federal judges have blocked enforcement of laws in Alabama and Arkansas, and several other states are considering bills to restrict or ban care. Proposed bans are also pending before Texas and Missouri's governors.

Oklahoma on Thursday agreed to not enforce its ban while opponents of the law seek a preliminary injunction against it in federal court.

These bans have spread quickly, with only three states enacting such laws before this year.

Before DeSantis signed the latest ban, Florida was one of two states that had restricted the care via regulations or administrative action. Texas' governor has ordered child welfare officials to investigate reports of children receiving such care as child abuse, though a judge has blocked those investigations.



Glenda Starke wears a transgender flag as a counter protest during a rally in favor of a ban on gender-affirming health care legislation, March 20, 2023, at the Missouri Statehouse in Jefferson City, Mo. Credit: AP Photo/Charlie Riedel, File

Three transgender youth and their parents who are suing to block Florida's earlier ban on the care for minors expanded their challenge on Wednesday to include the prohibition DeSantis signed into law.

Every major medical organization, including the American Medical Association, has opposed the bans and supported the medical care for youth when administered appropriately. Lawsuits have been filed in several states where bans have been enacted this year.

States poised to act

A proposed ban on gender-affirming care for minors is awaiting action before Republican Gov. Mike Parson in Missouri. The state's Republican attorney general, Andrew Bailey, this week withdrew a rule he had proposed that would have gone further by also restricting access to the care for adults.

Bailey cited the bill pending before Parson as a reason for eliminating the rule, which had been blocked by a state judge.

Nebraska Republicans on Tuesday folded a 12-week abortion ban into a bill that would ban gender-affirming care for minors, potentially clearing the way for a final vote on the combined measure as early as this week.



Hundreds of people descend on the Nebraska Capitol, in Lincoln, on Tuesday, May 16, 2023, to protest plans by conservative lawmakers in the Nebraska Legislature to revive an abortion ban rejected last month by folding it into a bill that would ban gender-affirming care in transgender minors. Their chants, yells, and foot-stomping at times drowned out debate on the legislative floor. Credit: AP Photo/Margery Beck

A proposal that failed in New Hampshire's House on Thursday would have required school officials to disclose to inquiring parents that their child is using a different name or being referred to as being a different gender. Opponents said the bill would have exposed LGBTQ+ students to the risk of abuse at home.

Not all states are adopting restrictions, and some Democratic-led states are enacting measures aimed at protecting the rights of LGBTQ+ youth.

Michigan Democrats plan to introduce legislation Thursday that would ban conversion therapy for minors, a discredited practice of trying to "convert" people to heterosexuality.

The legislation is expected to move quickly with Democrats in control of all levels of state government. Democratic state Rep. Jason Hoskins, a sponsor of the bill, told The Associated Press that he hopes the legislation passes by the end of June, which is Pride Month.

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