

U.S.

Michigan Pronouns Law Declared an 'Abomination' by Former Judge

BY **GIULIA CARBONARO** ON 7/3/23 AT 9:00 AM EDT



U.S. MICHIGAN GENDER HATE CRIME LGBTQ RIGHTS



Listen to this article now

 Powered by **Trinity Audio**

00:00



1.0x

03:45

Michigan's recent bill making it a felony for people to harass or intimidate someone by [misgendering them](#) and using the wrong pronouns has sparked controversy in the state, with former judge and television personality Joe Brown calling the measure an "abomination."

The new measure, House Bill 4474, is part of a package of legislation that would replace Michigan's existing Ethnic Intimidation Act and would make it a hate crime to cause someone to "feel terrorized, frightened, or threatened" with words.

It expands the existing law to cover sex, sexual orientation, age, gender identity or expression, and physical or mental disability. Religion, ethnicity and race were already included in the previous legislation and will still be covered under the new law.

Michigan has recently been pushing reforms and new measures that would expand the [protection of LGBTQ+ rights](#) in the state, going against a nationwide trend that has seen other states moving to limit rights for transgender youth.

SUBSCRIBE NOW FROM JUST \$1 >



A Trans rights activist wears an earring that says "they" in London, on January 17, 2023. A new bill passed by the Michigan House would make it a felony to intimidate and harass someone by misgendering them.

DAN KITWOOD/GETTY IMAGES

Last week, Michigan banned [conversion therapy](#), the controversial practice trying to "cure" LGBTQ+ people of their sexual orientation and gender identity, for minors in the state.

HB 4474 was passed by the Democrat-controlled Michigan House of Representatives in a 59 to 50 vote on June 20, and it now moves to the state [Senate](#) for consideration. If passed, it would need to be signed into law by Governor [Gretchen Whitmer](#), a Democrat. The Michigan Senate has a 20 to 18 Democratic majority.

Under the bill—which makes it a hate crime for a person to threaten another by deliberately using the wrong pronouns with an intimidating purpose—offenders would be guilty "of a felony punishable by imprisonment for not more than 5 years, or by a fine of not more than \$10,000."

[SIGN UP FOR NEWSWEEK'S EMAIL UPDATES >](#)

Brown, an independent who came under fire last year for making crude (and what many called misogynistic) comments about women leaders, wrote on [Twitter](#) that the new Michigan bill was "obscenely contrary" to the First Amendment.

JudgeJoeBrown 
@JudgeJoeBrownTV · [Follow](#) 

This type of abomination must be stopped

This is so obscenely contrary to American 1st A Law that the only fit 'Adjectives' to describe it are profane

Michigan House passes bill where using wrong pronouns ≈ a felony, fineable up to \$10,000

foxnews.com
Michigan House passes bill that could make using wrong pronouns a f...
The Michigan state House of Representatives passed HB 4474, making it a felony to "intimidate" someone of a protected class with inclusion...

7:27 AM · Jul 2, 2023 

 452  Reply  Share

[Read 144 replies](#)

"This type of abomination must be stopped," [he tweeted](#). "This is so obscenely contrary to American 1st A[mendment] Law that the only fit 'Adjectives' to describe it

are profane Michigan House passes bill where using wrong pronouns ≈ a felony, fineable up to \$10,000."

"Evidently Michigan wants to keep sending cases to the [Supreme Court](#) that will trigger the left," [commented](#) one Twitter user. "1st Amendment applies. Bill will be deemed unconstitutional," [another person tweeted](#).

Other critics of the bill have claimed that the new measure violates people's rights under the First Amendment.

"The state of Michigan is now explicitly allowing the gender delusion issue to be used as a 'protected class,'" Michigan state Representative Angela Rigas, a Republican, told the Daily Wire. "This opens up numerous issues when it comes to the courts and the continued weaponization of the system against conservatives."

"We saw similar concerns when they wanted to pass blocks on 'conversion' therapy. It seems Dems want to be in the business of telling people how to think," she said.



The Josh Hammer Show

Big Conservative Victories at the Supreme Court

ART19

SHARE SUBSCRIBE DOWNLOAD DESCRIPTION

00:00 / 40:59

Privacy Policy

The image shows a YouTube video player interface. On the left is a red thumbnail for 'THE JOSH HAMMER SHOW' with a portrait of Josh Hammer and the 'Newsweek' logo. The video title is 'Big Conservative Victories at the Supreme Court' by 'The Josh Hammer Show'. Below the title are icons for 'SHARE', 'SUBSCRIBE', 'DOWNLOAD', and 'DESCRIPTION'. A large red play button is centered over a video player area that shows a duration of '00:00 / 40:59'. In the top right corner of the player area is the 'ART19' logo. In the bottom right corner is a 'Privacy Policy' link.

But Democratic state Representative Noah Arbit, who helped lead the legislative package containing the controversial measure, said that the new law will help bring Michigan from a "national laggard to a national leader" in addressing hate crimes.

"No Michigander should ever feel unsafe or threatened because of who they are or the community they belong to," Arbit, an openly gay man, said on the House floor on June 20.

Newsweek reached out to Arbit, Rigas, and the Human Rights Campaign via email for comment.

REQUEST REPRINT & LICENSING, SUBMIT CORRECTION OR VIEW EDITORIAL GUIDELINES

Popular in the Community

Commander of
Russia's Chechen...

Josh Hawley
faces calls to

AdChoices

Sponsored

Conversation 105 Comments

 17 Viewing

Start a discussion, not a fire. Post with kindness. Read our guidelines [here](#).

What do you think?  

Sort by **Best** ▾

H



If calling someone Mr. or Ms., Sir or Ma'am, causes them to feel terrorized or threatened, then the problem isn't with the person saying the pronoun.

Reply ·  23  1 · Share



so someone says they "feel" threatened - then they put that person in jail or 10,000 fine. EVERYONE can feel "threatened" on anything.

i feel threatened by the trans not respecting MY views and convictions, trying to make me a slave of the trans person life

Reply ·  31  5 · Share



Another step in the thought police having control of our lives. Fortunately politicians have read neither Aldous Huxley nor George Orwell. Which is just as well, as the works of the authors would be far beyond their ability to comprehend.

Reply ·  25  9 · Share

 1 reply



I'm all for LGBT rights, but this seems like a clear overreach that conflicts with the first amendment.

Stuff like this doesn't help anyone because it will get thrown out as unconstitutional and it only gives MAGAs something to rally around.

Reply · 21 16 · Share



healthdude

1 day ago **This is compelled speech. It will never stand a legal review.**

Reply · 25 5 · Share



JC1432 It should give ALL freedom loving people something to rally behind, don't you think?

1 day ago Reply · 15 6 · Share

1 reply

Show 1 more reply

Der Spassvogel

1 day ago

B

...

I think this is a bit extreme on the face of it, but in looking at the law it's only a crime if there is **proven** intimidation. It states "Intimidate" means a **willful course of conduct involving repeated or continuing harassment of another individual that would cause a reasonable individual to feel t...**

See more

Reply · 9 11 · Share

c

...

Newsweek is reporting the Republican spin, not the actual law. They get more revenue that way.

Your Other Left

Reply 6 20 · Share

1 reply

Show 1 more reply

Emmanuel Goldst

1 day ago

...

Oh and dont let little weasels gaslight you by saying "this is only in cases of harassment and intimidation".

They consider misgendering someone on purpose harassment. So no dice. It is already illegal to threaten somebody.

Reply · 31 11 · Share

...

Misgender? There's 2 genders. Only 2. People are walking are walking around wanting be identified as many odd things for example, a furry. This whole thing is getting out of hand. So if we see a stranger and we don't know anything about them, we will get in serious trouble because we identified IT ...

See more

Reply · 3 · Share



Five years in jail for "misgendering" someone? It's time for regular people to act against transgendering. It is an illness, not a cause to be celebrated.

BollWeevil

Reply · 34 10 · Share
1 day ago

1 reply



A felony?? how about when they call you horrible names if you get their fantasy name wrong??? This is insane.

Reply **Cannibal** 9 · Share

1 reply
1 day ago

KG



This is the most ridiculous thing I have seen so far. . I'm gonna call them what I want to. That is my right. If they are a man I will call them a man and vice versa with a woman. This is really getting to be a communist country and the dems need to go.

Reply · 30 6 · Share

ChestRockwell

1 reply
1 day ago

Show More Comments

Godschild84

13 hours ago

The Debate

America Is Headed in the Wrong Direction



AMERICA IS HEADED IN THE WRONG DIRECTION

By Anne C. Bailey



Your Other Left

VS

1 day ago

America Is Worth Celebrating

By Lee Habeeb



Opinion

Emmanuel Goldst

Efforts to Absolve Saudi Arabia of 9/11 Responsibility Can't Be Tolerated

By Brett Eagleson



Don't Believe the Headlines: This Court is Very 'Normal'

By Josh Hammer

Kenneth genari

1 day ago



This Supreme Court Is a Rubber Stamp on Extremism

By Yasmin Radjy



Long After Wars End, Landmines Continue to Kill

By Heng Ratana



UFO Claims Demand Skepticism—And Investigation

By Dillon Guthrie



A Message From Disaster-Hit Pajaro, Calif.

By Devon Gray And Greg Kaufmann



The Supreme Court Chose Freedom Over Fear. Our Country Should, Too

By Jonathan Scruggs



Prigozhin Episode Will Only Strengthen Vladimir Putin

By Paul Du Quenoy



Biden's Student Loan Forgiveness Was Always a Sham

By John Yoo & Robert Delahunty



Biden Won't Pack the Supreme Court, and It's Killing Democracy

By David Faris



The Supreme Court Just Proved the American Dream Isn't for Black People

By Maggie Bell



Supreme Court Ruling Shows It's Time to Turn From Racism to 'Gracism'

By David Anderson



**GET THE BEST OF
NEWSWEEK VIA EMAIL**

NEWSWEEK VIA EMAIL

Email address

LATEST NEWS

Ben & Jerry's suggests returning "stolen Indigenous land" in July 4 message

"False flag" allegations fly amid Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant rhetoric

Marjorie Taylor Greene rips Cori Bush over call for reparations

Trump calls for "sick puppet" Jack Smith to be "put out to rest"

Elephants have a very human way of eating dinner

Republican Party ridiculed after tweeting wrong flag for Fourth of July

Chinese help for peace a good thing: Israeli politician

Police officer sparks outrage, investigation after shooting family's dog

New ban on Biden admin's tech contacts is a "blow to public safety": Lawyer

Oath Keepers leader warns Trump about trial

How Kate Middleton paid a fashion tribute to Britain's healthcare workers

Editor's Picks



Supreme Court LGBTQ 'Fake Case' Could be Reversed— Lawyer

"It's a fake case. There's no controversy," said former SCOTUS lawyer Neal Katyal regarding a Christian designer refusing to work for a gay couple.

By Giulia Carbonaro

2 MIN READ

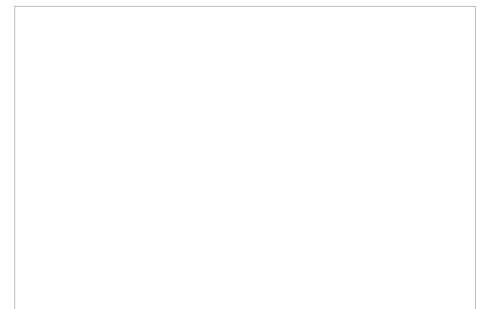
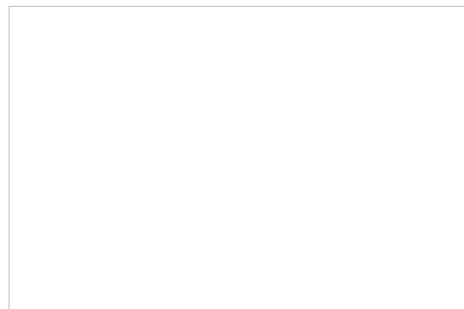
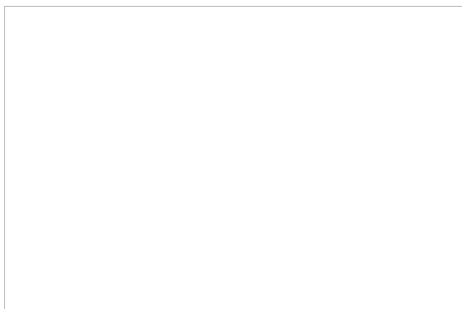


Trump-Appointed Prosecutor Pushes Back on Republicans' Hunter Biden Claims

U.S. Attorney David Weiss rejected GOP allegations of retaliation against an IRS whistleblower in a letter sent to Representative Jim Jordan.

By Andrew Stanton

3 MIN READ



Josh Hawley's Wife Faces Calls to Be Sanctioned Over Supreme Court Case

By Khaleda Rahman
3 MIN READ

Wagner Group Fires One of Its Five Leaders—a Former Russian Army Colonel

By Isabel van Brugen
2 MIN READ

Ron DeSantis' Campaign Is Imploding

By Ewan Palmer
4 MIN READ

Premium Subscription

Digital + Monthly (Ad Free Trial)

- ✓ Newsweek magazine delivered to your door
- ✓ Ad free Newsweek.com experience
- ✓ All newsletters + podcasts
- ✓ Unlimited access to Newsweek.com
- ✓ iOS and Android app access

SUBSCRIBE NOW

U.S.

World

Tech & Science

Culture

Autos

Rankings

Health

Opinion

Subscriptions

Digital+ Monthly (Ad Free Trial)

Experts

Education

Fact Check

My Turn

Podcasts

Mightier

Vantage

Unconventional

\$1.00

Digital+ Yearly \$49.00

Premium Monthly \$9.99

Premium Yearly \$99

Trending

Joe Biden Russia-Ukraine War Donald Trump

Vladimir Putin

Newsletters in your inbox [See all](#)

The Bulletin
(Mondays to Saturdays)
[See Sample](#)

The Debate
(Tuesdays)

The Cover
(Wednesdays)
[See Sample](#)

For The Culture
(Tuesdays and Thursdays)
[See Sample](#)

The Frontlines
(Thursdays)
[See Sample](#)

Infinite Scroll
(Tuesdays)
[See Sample](#)

The Josh Hammer Report
(Wednesdays)
[See Sample](#)

Mightier (Coming soon)

In The Magazine

July 07
2023 Issue

Email address

Sign up now

You can unsubscribe at any time.
By signing up you are agreeing to our Terms of Service and Privacy Policy

Company

[About Us](#)

[Masthead](#)

[Diversity](#)

[Announcements](#)

[Archive](#)

[Policies and Standards](#)

[Mission Statement](#)

[Leadership](#)

[Newsletters](#)

[Press Center](#)

Editions:

[U.S. Edition](#)

[日本](#)

[Polska](#)

[România](#)

Contact

[Advertise](#)

[Careers](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Corrections](#)

Terms of Use

[Cookie Policy](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Terms & Conditions](#)

[Terms of Sale](#)

[Do Not Sell My Personal](#)

[Information](#)

© 2023 NEWSWEEK DIGITAL LLC