



NEWS

LGBTQ+ Groups Fight Proposals That Strip Protections From Transgender Kids

By [Lesley McClurg](#)  Sep 2

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Protect Kids California, a recently formed group of mostly conservative state lawmakers and activists, filed paperwork this week to try to add three statewide initiatives to the November 2024 ballot that would ask voters to weigh in on hot-button issues like access to gender-affirming health care for transgender youth.

The measures are aimed at “returning to traditional social norms,” said Jonathan Zachreson, a Roseville City School District board member and president of Students First California, a separate group that’s bankrolling the new effort.

“The United States is going in the wrong direction,” added Zachreson, whose group drew attention for protesting pandemic lockdowns and vaccine mandates.

‘The actions of these extremists and elected officials are dangerous and they have consequences — with anti-LGBTQ+ hate crimes increasing significantly in California over the past couple of years.’

—Jorge Reyes Salinas, communications director, Equality California

All three ballot measure submissions will now be reviewed by the state Attorney General’s Office, which has until late October of this year to prepare a title and summary. At that point, the backers of the measures can begin circulating petitions for signatures. Each measure **must collect nearly 550,000 signatures (PDF)** to qualify for the 2024 ballot.

Transgender advocates say the effort is putting LGBTQ+ youth directly in harm’s way. According to a **2023 national survey** from The Trevor Project, a nonprofit suicide-prevention group, almost a third of LGBTQ+ youth said they suffered from mental health issues due to discriminatory policies and legislation. The survey also found that 41% of LGBTQ+ youth have seriously considered committing suicide within the last year.

“The actions of these extremists and elected officials are dangerous and they have consequences — with anti-LGBTQ+ hate crimes increasing significantly in California over the past couple of years,” said Jorge Reyes Salinas, a spokesperson for LGTBQ+ advocacy group Equality California, and has pledged to organize to quash these efforts.

The first initiative would require that collegiate sports teams and facilities be segregated by biological

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The second initiative would require schools to notify parents if a child requests that a teacher or peer identify them as a gender different from the one assigned at birth.

That issue recently garnered headlines when Chino Valley Unified School District enacted a similar policy, prompting the California Attorney General’s office to sue the district, arguing such a policy is a civil rights violation.

“Let’s call this policy what it is: It is a forced outing policy,” Bonta said at a press conference earlier this week, announcing the suit. “It tramples on students’ rights. It presents students with a terrible choice: Either walk back your rights to gender identity and gender expression, to be yourself, to be who you are. Or, face the risk of serious harm.”

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The third initiative submitted by the group would prevent doctors from providing gender-affirming care like puberty blockers to people under 18.

“These kids are fast-tracked to removing body parts and put on cross-sex hormones,” said Erin Friday, a backer of the measure and self-proclaimed Democrat, who says her daughter considered transitioning when she was 13, but was ultimately dissuaded from doing so.

Opponents point to studies showing that access to **puberty blockers and hormone therapies is crucial in reducing the high rate of suicides among transgender youth.**

“These extremists want the state of California to override parents, override the doctors, override the kids whose life is at issue. And say, ‘You’re just not allowed to get that health care,’” said state Sen. Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco), a vehement opponent of the campaign. “This is an absolute overreach and it is very dangerous.”

Last September, Wiener sponsored, **SB 107**, a bill to ensure that transgender youth and their families from outside of California can come to the state to safely access hormones or puberty blockers without fear of prosecution.

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