

Nov 14

Moral Panic Losing Steam? TX Trans Boy to Resume Role in Oklahoma!

In North Texas, Max Hightower will resume his role in the school's production of Oklahoma! Meanwhile, the Daily Caller reports Disney is allowing janitorial staff to including pronouns on their nametags.

The right's moral panic over trans issues on the right has a distinct feeling of the air finally leaking out of the balloon at the moment. The top story in trans news today is wholly positive: The school board for Sherman, TX reversed their decision to ban a transgender boy, senior Max Hightower, from playing a male role in Sherman High School's planned production of Oklahoma! This move comes after the public resoundingly rejected the idea

that a musical written in the 1940s that has been a staple of high school productions for decades could be too mature, or that students in school plays should be confined to playing roles that aligned with their birth-assignments.

When it comes to anti-trans propaganda, the pickings are slim today as the right continues to focus primarily on the conflict in the middle east. While the anti-trans stories haven't completely disappeared, the items still being published have a certain lackluster quality. For example, a story in the Daily Caller reports that Disney employees are going to have the option of including pronouns on their nametags.

screenshot from the Daily Caller

Wow. Pronoun pins for some employees at Disney... and you say they're completely optional? "The initiative is still voluntary, according to the employees, and is currently being rolled out to all janitorial positions," writes social issues reporter Sarah Wilder.

Another story involves a sorority where some members sued to attempt to expel a trans woman who had been approved as a member. The suit was dismissed by a judge last August, who held that Kappa Kappa Gamma has the right to define woman and the court had no place inserting itself in their decision to include transgender women in that definition. Today Fox News and the New York Post report that some aging alumni of Kappa Kappa Gamma have been expelled after misusing the email lists for the sorority to fundraise for the suit against the chapter and violating the chapter's rules in their public statements.

These stories represent a far cry from the heyday of the rights moral panic, only a few short months ago, when every conservative news site posted multiple stories a day dealing with the transgender community. At the Daily Wire, the source of the anti-trans documentary What is a Woman?, not a single story on the homepage today concerned the transgender community, a first since Assigned Media began monitoring the site just over a year ago.

While the hysteria may be fading, the consequences of the moral panic on the right will not be so easily reversed, with 85 bills passed in 24 states targeting the transgender community. These bills continue to make the lives of trans people across the country more difficult, as do the many lawsuits targeting gender-affirming care providers. Many trans people fear these suits could have a chilling effect, discouraging providers from offering such care even in states where it remains legal to do so.

We also see continued cause for concern in mainstream outlets, such as an editorial by the board of Dallas Morning News that used the story of Max Hightower and Sherman High School's production of Oklahoma! as a vehicle to push misinformation about gender-affirming care for young people. However, while serious challenges

remain, it's good and heartening news that the fever of anti-trans hate on the right seems to be breaking, at least for the moment.

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