

## Texas

# Texas supreme court allows ban on transgender youth care to take effect

Meanwhile, a federal judge temporarily blocks law that drag show artists fear will be used to shut them down or put them in jail

Associated Press in Austin

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Legal advocates called the law and the high court's decision Thursday 'cruel'. Photograph: Reginald Mathalone/NurPhoto/Shutterstock

The **Texas** supreme court allowed a new state law banning gender-affirming care for minors to take effect on Friday, setting up Texas to be the most populous state with such restrictions on transgender children.

Legal advocates who sued on behalf of the families and doctors, including the American Civil Liberties Union, called the law and the high court's decision Thursday "cruel".

"Transgender youth and their families are forced to confront the start of the school year fearful of what awaits them. But let us be clear: the fight is far from over," the advocacy groups said in a joint statement.

Last week, **a state district judge ruled** the pending law violated the rights of transgender children and their families to Texas seek appropriate medical care, and violated doctors' ability to follow "well-established, evidence-based" medical guidelines under threat of losing their license.

The judge issued a temporary injunction to block the law and state officials immediately appealed to the state's highest court for civil cases.

The order from the all-Republican supreme court lifting the injunction and allowing the law to take effect did not explain the decision. The order did not address the lower court's ruling that the law is unconstitutional, and a full hearing is expected.

More than 20 states have adopted laws to ban some gender-affirming care for minors, although some are not yet in effect or have been put on hold by courts.

The Texas law would prevent transgender minors from accessing hormone therapies, puberty blockers and transition surgeries, even though medical experts say such surgical procedures are rarely performed on children.

"Texas kids are safer today because of the supreme court ruling," said Jonathan Covey, policy director of Texas Values, a conservative group that supported the law.

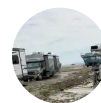
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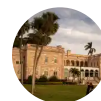
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The lawsuit argued the Texas law will have devastating consequences for transgender teens if they are unable to obtain critical treatment recommended by their physicians and parents.

Several doctors who treat transgender children said they worry their patients will suffer deteriorating mental health, which could possibly lead to suicide, if they are denied safe and effective treatment.

The Texas ban was signed into law in June by Greg Abbott, who was the first governor to order the investigations of families of transgender minors who receive gender-affirming care.

Also on Thursday, a federal judge on temporarily blocked [a new Texas law](#) that drag show artists fear will be used to shut them down or put them in jail.

The law, approved by the Republican-controlled legislature, would expand the legal definition in the Texas criminal code of what is considered to be an illegal public performance of sexual conduct in front of children. It is part of a broader effort in Texas and other conservative states to crack down on drag shows and limit LGBTQ+ rights.

The US district judge David Hittner in Houston issued the temporary restraining order after a group of drag performers and LGBTQ+ rights advocates sought to keep the law from taking effect on Friday. During a two-day court hearing earlier this week, drag performers and advocates said the new law threatened their livelihoods and would censor their freedom of expression.

In his order, Hittner agreed that the new law is likely unconstitutional because it violates their first amendment rights. Hittner said he issued the temporary restraining order to immediately stop the law while he prepares a more permanent order in the case.

“This temporary order is a much-needed reprieve for all Texans, especially our LGBTQIA+ and transgender community, who have been relentlessly targeted by our state legislature,” said Brian Klosterboer, an attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union of Texas, which filed the lawsuit on behalf of the plaintiffs.

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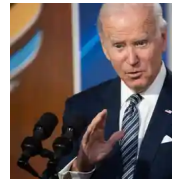
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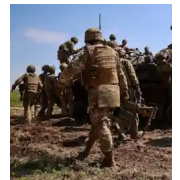
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