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# **As Extreme as It Gets: Supposed 'Moderates' in GOP Conference Choose as Speaker an Election Denier Who Called LGBTQ+ People a 'Deviant Group'**

by **Delphine Luneau** • October 25, 2023



*With Consistent Zeroes on [HRC's Congressional Scorecard](#) and a Career Record of Unbridled Hate, Mike Johnson Will Be Most Openly Anti-LGBTQ+ Speaker in Modern History*

*Rep. Johnson Introduced [National "Don't Say LGBTQ+" Bill](#)*

**WASHINGTON** — In the wake of the vote today in the House of Representatives making Mike Johnson the new Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) — the nation's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) civil rights organization — condemned his selection by the anti-equality majority and pointed to Johnson's extensive history as an opponent of LGBTQ+ rights as a lobbyist and lawmaker.

*“The MAGA House majority has selected the most anti-equality Speaker in U.S. history by elevating Mike Johnson — this is a choice that will be a stain on the record of everyone who voted for him,” said HRC President Kelley Robinson. “Johnson is someone who doesn’t hesitate to express his disdain for the LGBTQ+ community from the rooftops and then introduces legislation that seeks to erase us from society. Just like Jim Jordan, Mike Johnson is an election-denying, anti-LGBTQ+ extremist, and the lawmakers who appeared to stand on principle in opposing Jordan’s bid have revealed themselves to be just as out-of-touch as their new leader.”*

### **Johnson Has an Appalling History of Attacking LGBTQ+ Rights**

From his more than a decade working as an attorney for the virulently anti-

LGBTQ+ hate group [Alliance Defending Freedom](#), to his stint as an archenemy of LGBTQ+ equality in the Louisiana legislature, and through his tenure as a hard-right bomb-thrower in Congress, Mike Johnson has a scorched earth history as someone who seeks to drive people out of our society purely on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

- Johnson sponsored a [national “Don’t Say LGBTQ+” bill](#) in the last session of Congress, legislation that would have defined “sexually oriented material” to include “any topic involving gender identity, gender dysphoria, transgenderism, sexual orientation, or related subjects” and banned discussion of those topics in schools.
- Johnson led a Congressional hearing [attacking health care for trans youth](#), spreading lies and disinformation about what that care consists of and pushing for unqualified lawmakers to insert themselves into discussions that should take place between medical professionals, parents and their children. He also was a cosponsor of Marjorie Taylor Greene’s legislation aiming to block health care for trans youth nationwide and threatening to throw doctors who provide care in prison for as much as 25 years.
- In his time in Congress, Johnson has earned nothing but zeroes on the Human Rights Campaign’s [Congressional Scorecard](#), which rates lawmakers on how they vote on bills of importance to the LGBTQ+ community. Key votes included Johnson’s opposition to the Equality Act, the Respect for Marriage Act, the LGBTQI+ Data Inclusion Act, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, and the Violence Against Women Act.
- After working behind the curtain for years at ADF, either helping to craft or defend legislation backed by the religious right, Johnson was elected to the

Louisiana legislature, where he dedicated his one and only term to rolling back LGBTQ+ rights. In 2015, he authored House Bill 707, a License to Discriminate bill that would have prevented the state government from enforcing nondiscrimination provisions when professionals or businesses discriminate against same-sex couples based on religious beliefs.

- During his time at ADF, Johnson [argued that “the homosexual lifestyle” is “morally wrong and physically dangerous.”](#) in response to an anti-bullying event that supported of LGBTQ+ students.
- In a 2004 editorial piece in The (Monroe, La.) News-Star newspaper opposing marriage equality, Johnson wrote “If we change marriage for the homosexual activists, we will have to do it for every deviant group. Polygamists, polyamorists, pedophiles, and others will be next in line to claim equal protection.”

## **A Nation That Supports LGBTQ+ Equality**

[According to PRRI](#), eight in ten Americans (80%) favor laws that would protect gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people against discrimination in jobs, public accommodations, and housing. Nearly half (48%) support these protections “strongly.”

Overwhelming numbers of Democrats (90%), Independents (82%), and Republicans (66%), favor nondiscrimination provisions for LGBTQ+ people. Support has grown over the last five years among all three partisan groups.

Strong majorities of voters in every state support these laws, including 80% of Louisianans. In fact, there is no state in the nation where support is below 65%. It is also worth noting that vast majorities of most major religious groups support nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ people.

[Polling released](#) after the 2022 midterm elections found that less than 5 percent of surveyed voters identified gender affirming care for transgender youth or transgender participation in sports as issues motivating them to vote — last on the list of motivating issues. Despite this reality, House Republicans [recently staged](#) a virtual dress rehearsal for the anti-trans disinformation voters will undoubtedly see more of throughout the 2024 election cycle.

*The Human Rights Campaign is America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people. HRC envisions a world where LGBTQ+ people are embraced as full members of society at home, at work and in every community.*

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