



## **Democracy Forward's Commitment to Defend the Rights of the LGBTQ+ Community Amidst Rising Threats**

Over the past few years in states and regions across the nation, there have been hundreds of bills and legislation aimed at rolling back the rights of LGBTQ+ people, targeting them, or banning essential health care and services. Since President Trump's inauguration, these attacks have also escalated at the federal level through his administration's executive actions and rapid implementation of Project 2025. This fact sheet provides information regarding how Democracy Forward is addressing attacks at the federal and state levels. It also highlights some of the legal challenges that Democracy Forward filed in the first Trump administration to protect the rights of LGBTQ+ people and communities, as such challenges are reminders of actions that could be expected during this federal administration.

Democracy Forward has a robust legal practice at both the state and federal levels. Since Inauguration, Democracy Forward has emerged as a critical bulwark against the unconstitutional actions of the Trump-Vance administration. **The organization has filed more than 70 legal actions and launched 90 investigations**, securing multiple significant victories that protect LGBTQ+ individuals from harmful policies.

We are committed to challenging anti-LGBTQ+ actors in the courts as we work with partners to build communities where LGBTQ+ individuals can be free from hate and discrimination.

### **Democracy Forward's Recent Actions to Defend LGBTQ+ Rights and Freedoms**

#### ***Essential Human Services for LGBTQ+ People***

- **Stopping the Federal Funding Freeze that Threatened a Range of Programs for LGBTQ+ People:** On behalf of our client SAGE and others, [we secured the first court order and only nationwide order](#) to prevent the implementation of the administration's effort to freeze nearly all federal funding across the government, which would have disrupted the provision of essential services, including programs supporting childcare, eldercare, food services, health initiatives, and community initiatives. Many of these programs provide critical services for LGBTQ+ people of all ages. ([National Council of Nonprofits v. Office of Management and Budget](#))

#### ***Defending the Rights of Trans Federal Workers***

- **Challenging the Administration's Transphobic Bathroom Ban:** On behalf of a transgender federal worker for the Illinois National Guard, [we joined co-counsel to challenge the administration's federal bathroom ban](#). These actions violate Title VII and the 5th Amendment of the Constitution as well as the federal Administrative Procedure Act. ([Withdraw, Class Complaint of Discrimination](#))

#### ***Blocking Overhauls of Education Equity and Title IX Protections***

- **Blocking the Dismantling of the Department of Education, including Title IX Protections for LGBTQ+ Students:** On behalf of a coalition of school districts and unions representing educators and school staff, we won a preliminary injunction to [block the administration's unlawful effort](#) to dismantle the Department of Education. This dismantling would gut the office that enforces anti-discrimination protections under Title IX, including for LGBTQ+ students. ([Somerville Public Schools v. Trump](#))

### ***Challenging the Administration's Anti-Equity, Anti-LGBTQ+ Crusade***

- **Opposing the President's Executive Orders that Target Equity Initiatives:** On behalf of a diverse coalition, [we and our partners secured a broad, nationwide injunction](#) blocking the implementation of the two "anti-DEIA Executive Orders," that undermine equity efforts including consideration of sexual orientation. The court's ruling was the first to showcase the significant problems under the First Amendment with the President's crusade against diversity, equity, and inclusion. The injunction has been stayed by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit while the appeal is pending. ([National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education et al v. Trump et al](#))
- **Challenging the Termination of Federal Workers Based On Their Engagement In Pro-Diversity, LGBTQ+ Initiatives:** We filed a lawsuit on behalf of a group of federal employees before the Merit Systems Protection Board [challenging the termination and targeting of federal employees](#) for their participation in diversity, equity, and inclusion activities or programs. ([Stainnak v. Trump](#))
- **Challenging the Termination of EEOC Commissioner Joclyn Samuels:** The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is charged with ensuring that people, including LGBTQ+ people, can work free from discrimination. On behalf of Jocelyn Samuels, we filed suit to challenge the President's unprecedented attempt to [remove a sitting EEOC Commissioner](#) before the expiration of her statutorily established term – a move that threatens the independence of the EEOC and its vital mission to protect Americans from workplace discrimination. ([Samuels v. Trump](#))

These cases add to significant work we have led in states across the country that seek to undermine protections for LGBTQ+ individuals.

- We partnered on efforts in **Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana and West Virginia** in [defense of Title IX protections](#) for transgender students, including rules that would have ensured transgender students are able to use school facilities, such as restrooms and locker rooms, that align with their gender identity.
- We worked on behalf of Small Business Majority, Main Street Alliance, and American Sustainable Business Council in support of the [EEOC's Anti-Harassment Guidance](#) and against attempts by the state of **Texas and the Heritage Foundation** to challenge the inclusion of legal protections for LGBTQ+ people in the workplace.
- We have also brought a case (currently pending) in **Alabama** challenging a public library's efforts to remove from the shelves [books featuring LGBTQ+ characters and themes](#), as well as themes relating to other historically marginalized communities, and successfully blocked a law in **Arkansas** that attempted to [impose criminal penalties on librarians](#) if they failed to stop minors from accessing certain books, including those with LGBTQ+ themes.

We track other efforts to use state governments to undermine LGBTQ+ protections in Democracy Forward's ["The People's Guide to ALEC's Plan for the States."](#)

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