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OPINION

Cruel Bills Target Trans Children

New laws openly endorse discrimination

By SAGE DOLAN-SANDRINO

In states across the country, small-minded lawmakers are pushing cruel, vicious new bills targeting transgender children.

These bills threaten to ban everything from medical care to even acknowledging the existence of trans people in the classroom. Many threaten parents and medical providers with prosecution. And all of them put the lives of young trans people at risk.

If these laws had been passed when I was transitioning, I might not be alive today.

As a trans student in middle school, I was dehumanized. I endured harassment, abuse, and physical violence for which I was the one punished. Even worse, my school responded to my coming out with harmful new policies.

For example, I was banned from the bathrooms. Instead of using the girls' room near my classrooms, I had to go down two flights of stairs, across an open courtyard, into another school building, and all the way to the end of another building to use the nurse's office bathroom.

This took so long that teachers began denying me permission to even go.



Sage Dolan-Sandrino

This kind of treatment takes a terrible toll. A national survey by the Trevor Project found that 42 percent of youth who identified as LGBTQI+ contemplated suicide in 2020 — a figure that rose to 52 percent for trans kids in particular.

What made the difference for me was getting age-appropriate, gender-affirming care.

That's exactly what all the major medical associations agree should be the standard of care for trans and non-binary children. Studies are also clear that with the support of families and schools and

communities, the rates of suicide and suicidal ideations among LGBTQI+ children decrease dramatically.

Unfortunately, a third of trans young people — my peers — face losing access to this care because of these terrible new proposals.

As of this spring, at least 15 Republican-led states had enacted or were considering laws that ban gender-affirming care for people under 18. (In Alabama, North Carolina, and Oklahoma, lawmakers are trying to restrict it even for 18-20 year-olds.)

These bills openly endorse harmful discrimination, including banning trans kids from public restrooms and school sports, and prohibiting them from listing their gender identity on vital personal records like driver's licenses and birth certificates.

Disturbingly, at least 10 of these states would deputize our neighbors and the general public to report doctors who give trans patients proper medical care, or children who openly identify as trans at school.

And most draconian of all, some of these bills threaten medical providers, parents, and caregivers of trans children with felonies.

A bill that passed the Idaho House would sentence medical providers who offered gender-affirming care to life in prison. It would even prohibit parents from taking

their kids out of state to get care.

Being trans is both joyful and painful. The joy comes from finally being seen for who we've always known ourselves to be. The pain comes from others misunderstanding and denying our identities — especially when this ignorance becomes legislation trying to erase us.

The infamous "Don't Say Gay" law in Florida prohibits even talking, in age-appropriate ways, about different gender identities and sexual orientations. A dozen more states are working on emulating this dangerous, homophobic, and transphobic law.

All of these bills put LGBTQI+ families at risk. They put big red bullseyes on the backs of children, families, educators, and medical professionals — and they encourage everyone else to fire.

To learn more about these dangerous bills and how you can protect the lives of LGBTQI+ children, join organizations like the National Transgender Law Center, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, the Human Rights Campaign, and the National Black Justice Coalition to see what you can do.

Everyone deserves the rights afforded to us as human beings. Especially children.

Sage Dolan-Sandrino, a fierce voice for LGBTQIA+ equity, was raised in Washington, D.C.

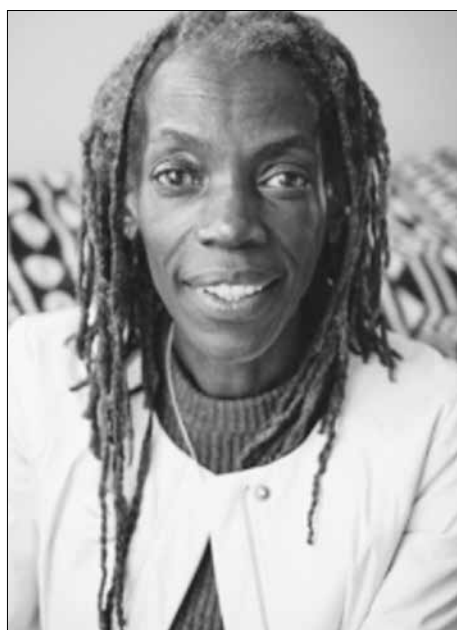
Asking for Your Vote

There so much more to do

In 2018, I was elected to the Portland City Council to change the way City Hall tackles our toughest challenges. For three years that is what I have been doing - bringing forward diverse voices and innovative ideas to address the crisis on our streets.

Even before the global pandemic, there were signs Portland was suffering from housing affordability, homelessness, and a lack of community safety for all our residents. So if you are wondering whether I'm creating the change we need, look no further than the \$700,000 that Portland's status quo power brokers are spending to attack me. These are some of the same people who have been calling the shots for decades, and whose neglect contributed to the problems we face.

Since taking office, I have made real progress: creating Portland Street Response, an unarmed crisis response team within Portland Fire & Rescue that responds directly to non-violent 911 calls to get support to people in need; expanding village style shelter space during the pandemic; and helping lead a successful effort



Joann Hardesty

to secure \$185 million to improve safety and invest in the vibrancy of 82nd Avenue.

My background is unconventional for a commissioner, as is my style. I am direct and honest, and take responsibility when I make a mistake. I am the first Black woman elected to City Council in our 179-year history. I live in East Portland. I'm a renter, U.S. Navy veteran, and an effective critic of city government who is fighting to reform our police, expand community

safety, and ensure basic services equitably reach the most vulnerable.

Portlanders are angry right now. I want you to know that I am right there with you. I see what you see. Outside of my apartment complex is a large houseless encampment. I've experienced people having a mental health crisis while I ride the bus to work downtown and across our city. I've feared for my personal safety as gun violence has escalated to record levels. None of this is acceptable. We can and must do better.

I'm running for re-election so that I can keep fighting for a recovery that is swift and just.

Portland's most precious asset is its people. Yet for too long, all but a privileged few have been left out of the decision making in Portland. You have my commitment to keep fighting for both immediate and long-term solutions to our most pressing challenges. Our implementation of even basic city functions is broken. I'm not only willing to call it out, I'm working everyday to create real change, and succeeding.

There is much more to do, and I ask for your vote so we can kick the old model to the curb and build the Portland we all deserve.

**Portland City Commissioner
Jo Ann Hardesty**

Jails Worse for Blacks

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"We hope the information in this audit report can help ground conversations about our legal system in facts that the public can trust," McGuirk said.

A series of audit recommendations are made to improve jail conditions, including a possible need to provide added financial resources to operate the jails, supports keeping jails below maximum capacities, and the elimination of isolation as a disciplinary sanction for individuals with mental health conditions.

The county jails should develop and implement a training program designed to reinforce informal solutions to discipline issues and to reduce the need for misconduct citations, the audit says.

The report recommends that the sheriff's office contract with professionals for training on cultural competency to identify and manage race-related implicit bias. It also calls for more training for deputies on how to work with adults in custody with mental health conditions, and expand the number of housing areas specifically reserved for individuals with mental health conditions.