

ANTI-DRAG LEGISLATION:

FACTS & Talking Points



Arizona legislators are filing and voting for bad-faith bills that target drag shows. These bills have not been created in response to a societal problem.

Rather, they're being used to advance the religious right's culture war against LGBTQIA+ people.

- ➔ The introduction of anti-drag legislation correlates with a rise in political rhetoric about drag performances and drag queen story hours, leading to a growing number of violent protests at drag events - more than 140 attacks in 2022 alone.
- ➔ The LGBTQ+ community already faces high levels of risk for physical and sexual violence and intimidation, at school, work, home, in public spaces, and at the hands of government officials. LGBTQ+ people are four times more likely to experience violent crime than non-LGBTQ+ people; rates are higher for trans women and trans people of color.
- ➔ Laws criminalizing dressing in clothing customarily worn by a gender to which a person was not assigned at birth are not new. These attempts to control how people dress were and are unconstitutional restrictions on expressive rights, used to disproportionately harm the LGBTQ+ community.
- ➔ These attacks on performers strike at the heart of our rights to gather, read, and perform together. Drag shows are an exercise of artistic and creative expression that should be free from government suppression. Any attempt to ban or restrict these performances is an affront to the First Amendment.
- ➔ Bills that define "drag" as anyone performing in clothing or in a manner different from the gender assigned to them at birth, extending far beyond drag shows to include any performance by a trans person. So acts with trans members might not be able to find a venue, even if the performances isn't a drag show. Or if a theater cast a woman as Peter Pan, that theater could be regulated as a sexually-oriented "adult" business.
- ➔ Read literally, such bills might prevent women from wearing pants. A minor could not watch a performance of "Mrs. Doubtfire," "Hairspray," "Mulan," or many of Shakespeare's plays. A concert at Phoenix Suns stadium would be classified as an "18-and-up" event. That's a lot of legislative overreach from the "party of small government."

Anti-drag bills target the LGBTQ+ community, putting people at risk of harm. These bills also endanger the free speech and association rights of private venues, performers, artists, and willing audiences. As an exercise of creative and artistic expression, drag shows should be free from government suppression.