Over 75 Criminal Justice Leaders Condemn the Criminalization of Transgender People and Gender-Affirming Healthcare

Elected prosecutors and law enforcement leaders say legislation discriminating against trans people harms public safety and pledge to not use limited resources to criminalize gender-affirming healthcare

Today, 76 elected prosecutors and law enforcement leaders – including Attorneys General, District Attorneys and law enforcement heads, as well as Law Enforcement Action Partnership and the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives – issued a joint statement condemning efforts by state legislatures across the country to criminalize transgender people and gender-affirming healthcare. In 2021 alone, at least 105 bills that discriminate against transgender people have been proposed in 34 states and 10 have become law. The signatories emphasize that these efforts are a threat to public safety, serve no legitimate purpose and erode trust that is critical to protecting all members of our community.

“Transgender people experience unconscionably high rates of violent victimization, and discriminatory laws will only heighten that danger,” said Miriam Krinsky, Executive Director of Fair and Just Prosecution, the organizer of the statement. “These laws have no public safety benefit and only put transgender members of our communities more at risk. Elected prosecutors have a responsibility to use their discretion to promote the safety and well-being of every person they are charged with protecting – these laws are in direct contravention of those obligations.”

The joint statement deems the recent tide of anti-trans bills “blatantly unconstitutional attacks on some of the most vulnerable Americans [which] will deeply harm public safety.” It notes that the high rate of violence against trans people is “both a moral travesty and an obstacle in our collective efforts to prevent crime, build public trust, and promote community well-being.” Accordingly, signatories state: “[W]e pledge to use our settled discretion and limited resources on enforcement of laws that will not erode the safety and well-being of our community. And we do not support the use of scarce criminal justice and law enforcement resources on criminalization of doctors who offer medically necessary, safe gender-affirming care to trans youth, parents who safeguard their child’s health and well-being by seeking out such treatments, or any individuals who use facilities aligned with their gender identity.”

“My community elected me to make decisions about how to use limited resources in the pursuit of justice and public safety. Laws criminalizing and discriminating against transgender people go
against my duty to protect every member of my community and to pursue equity and justice,” said 
Nueces County, Texas District Attorney Mark Gonzalez, a signatory to the statement.

Among the most concerning of these efforts are proposals to prevent trans youth from accessing life-saving gender-affirming healthcare, with some going so far as to criminalize parents who allow their children to receive these treatments. In 2021 alone, 20 state legislatures have considered these bills, which would only put trans youth in harm’s way – research has found that access to gender-affirming healthcare reduces suicide risk, which is critical given a 2020 survey that found over half of trans and non-binary youth had seriously considered suicide.

“Efforts to discriminate against any group of people within my community undermine the trust I work every day to build as a law enforcement leader,” said Charlottesville, Va. Police Chief RaShall M. Brackney, a signatory to the statement. “We must invest in the strategies proven to improve public safety and not allow the bias and bigotry of some to become the starting point for our law enforcement or criminal legal systems.”

Read the joint statement here and see the full list of signatories below.

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Fair and Just Prosecution is a national network of elected prosecutors working towards common-sense, compassionate criminal justice reforms. To learn more about FJP’s work, visit our website and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

**List of Signatories**

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Organizations

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National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives