



# Solidarity with Transgender and Nonbinary Youth

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Across America, laws and executive orders are criminalizing the lifesaving treatment that transgender youth need to complete their journey to wholeness and, at the same time, depriving parents of the right to make medical decisions for their children.

These laws, enacted or proposed in states across the country, are part of a broader campaign to reverse basic rights for LGBTQ+ Americans. Arizona, Arkansas, and Alabama already ban medical care for trans youth, and in Texas the state government has defined gender-affirming care as “child abuse.” Fifteen states have banned participation by transgender youth in school sports. Six states have adopted “don’t say gay or trans” laws that have erased any mention of LGBTQ+ people from school life.

The cruel irony of “pro-family” state governments seizing control from parents of their freedom to provide care for their own children is obvious enough. But even more dangerous is the message states are sending to transgender and nonbinary youth: your lives don’t matter. Suicide is an epidemic among LGBTQ+ youth and has been for years. When politicians stigmatize children and teenagers who are simply seeking to live their lives with integrity, the cost in mental suffering is high.

The UCC’s National Setting and the Open and Affirming Coalition are working together to oppose these laws. With more than 1,700 Open and Affirming congregations in 50 states, our churches can play a decisive role in interfaith coalitions opposed to laws and policies that attack families. But even more critical is the need for churches to send a clear message to LGBTQ+ youth that their lives matter, that their God-given gender identity or sexual orientation is a blessing, not a curse, that there are churches and faith communities where they are valued as children of God. In the weeks to come, the Coalition will join with the UCC’s National Ministries to provide the resources congregations need to join in statewide campaigns to safeguard the lives and dignity of LGBTQ+ youth. In the meantime, find your state’s LGBTQ+ advocacy organization at [www.openandaffirming.org/resources/issues/links](http://www.openandaffirming.org/resources/issues/links), and use the links below to learn more about how your church can act.

Coalition transgender-nonbinary resources  
[www.openandaffirming.org/resources/transgender](http://www.openandaffirming.org/resources/transgender)

National Center for Transgender Equality  
<https://transequality.org>

UCC-Coalition statement on Alabama  
[www.ucc.org/ucc-ministries-alabama-anti-trans-legislation-outrageous](http://www.ucc.org/ucc-ministries-alabama-anti-trans-legislation-outrageous)

UCC-Coalition statement on Texas  
[www.ucc.org/ucc-ministries-texas-transgender-directive-cruel-harmful-morally-wrong](http://www.ucc.org/ucc-ministries-texas-transgender-directive-cruel-harmful-morally-wrong)

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrew Lang is Executive Director of the Open and Affirming Coalition for the United Church of Christ, a network of churches that have adopted covenants affirming their LGBTQ+ members and neighbors.

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