



The *LGBTQ+ Task Force* has prepared the **Did You Know Newsletter** with information about current issues, policies and articles on the topic.

### **Covid-19**

Covid-19 is highlighting the importance of public health strategies while rapidly influencing the world and its people by redefining careers, relationships and family dynamics for everyone. The Human Rights Campaign Foundation published an [Issue Brief](#) which specifically considers the disproportionate ways that the pandemic could adversely affect individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+).

In the United States, *Lambda Legal* and *Democracy Forward* [filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) for its refusal to enforce anti-discrimination protections, which is leaving the LGBTQ+ community vulnerability during the pandemic.

### **LGBTQ+ Rights Around the world**

A strong global movement has led to significant achievements in ensuring that the rights of individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ are met. However, unequal and discriminatory policies and laws remain around the world. The Human Rights Watch monitors each country around the world. Check out what is happening [here](#).

Switzerland voted in favour of an [LGBTQ+ protection bill](#) to make discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and sexual identity illegal.

### **Conversion Therapy**

Conversion therapy (now sometimes being called Sexual Attraction Fluidity Exploration in Therapy (SAFE-T) consists of practices employed by licensed professionals or clergy to change, suppress or divert an individual's sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. Conversion therapy practices hold no therapeutic value and cause harm to individuals who are subject to them. The practices are not grounded in sound research and are associated with poor mental health. ILGA has published a [world survey on legal regulation of 'conversion therapies'](#).

Recently, in Canada, [federal legislation](#) was introduced to amend the criminal code to ban conversion therapy nationwide.

### **LGBTQ+ and Religious Rights**

There has been another example of a [clash between anti-discrimination protections and religious rights in Ohio](#), which leaves employers exposed to litigation from both the LGBTQ+ community and religious workers. The U.S. Supreme Court is expected to decide by July over whether federal anti-discrimination law protects gay and transgender employees.

### **LGBTQ+ Youth**

In South Carolina, the Comprehensive Health Education Act of 1988 is being [challenged by the National Center for Lesbian Rights and Lambda Legal](#) through a lawsuit that was filed recently to overturn the Act as an unconstitutional violation of the equal protection clause of the U.S. Constitution. They argue that the law restricting adequate sex education put youth at risk.

[In Idaho](#), Governor Brad Little signed the House Bill, HB500 (known as 'Fairness in Women's Sports Act') on Monday March 30, 2020. This makes Idaho the first state to have passed legislation restricting the participation of transgender athletes, and to legalize the practice of asking girls and women to undergo sex testing in order to compete. The measure applies to all sports teams sponsored by public schools, colleges and universities.

[In Alabama](#), in response to House Bill 303 on health care for transgender and intersex children, the Human Rights Watch has stated that it is not only unnecessary but would also seriously jeopardize the health and rights of transgender and intersex children.

### **Programs Making a Difference**

[GLESEN](#) is a national network of more than 1.5 million students, families, educators and education advocates working to create safe school and has been leading the movement for more than 25 years. Recently, they have produced some [research](#) examining the experiences of LGBTQ of color and provides some links to highlight how schools and teachers can be of support.

The [Family Acceptance Project](#) is an initiative that works to prevent health and mental health risks for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQ) children and youth, including suicide, homelessness, drug use and HIV – in the context of their families, cultures and faith communities. They use a research-based, culturally grounded approach to help ethnically, racially and religiously diverse families learn to support their LGBTQ children.

[Equal Eyes on Our World](#) is sponsored by UNAIDS and is an information initiative dedicated to the right of everyone to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, regardless of a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

[The Trevor Project](#) is a national organization that is leading the way in providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBTQ young people under 25 in accepting and inclusive environments. Trevor is also an MHLG partner and has extensive community resources, including Trevor Space, Trevor Ambassadors and NexGen groups.