

Supporting the Transgender Community - April 2, 2021

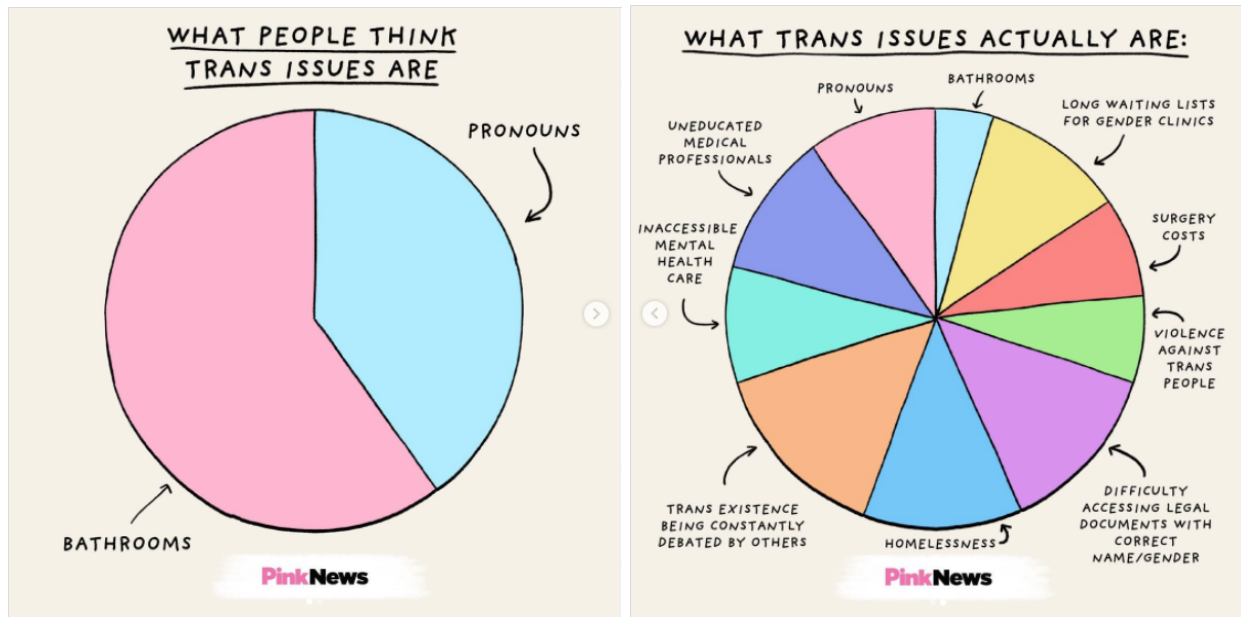
As transgender rights are being threatened in many states, we want to acknowledge the stress and anxiety that this news can bring to the LGBTQI+ community and families who have personal connections to this issue. Hilltop stands in solidarity with the LGBTQI+ community and condemns these transphobic discriminatory actions that go against the human rights of transgender communities.

Recently Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, and South Dakota have all passed laws that exclude transgender students from playing sports with the team of their chosen gender identity. In Arkansas, Alabama, and other states, bills are being debated that prevent trans youth from accessing life-saving gender-affirming care and penalizing doctors that support trans patients with felony charges. [This NPR episode shares the human impact of these transphobic laws.](#)

These state laws are part of a broader assault on access to healthcare protections and on the human rights of transgender people, especially targeting the transgender and gender expansive youth. According to recent medical information, transgender people, [including those in Vermont](#), are constantly being denied access to appropriate and affordable transgender healthcare due to health insurers' policies and national social security benefits programs or to a lack of relevant clinical and cultural competence among healthcare providers. Transgender people may be more likely to forego healthcare due to fear of discrimination.

In 2013, Vermont put into place protections for LGBTQI+ access to healthcare, and this commitment was reaffirmed in 2020 ([On LGBTQ+ Rights: Vermont and US Supreme Court Lead](#)). We are grateful that we are not facing this particular backslide into transphobic legislation, but news from other states can impact both the comfort level of people in our community and the tenor of the conversation around these topics. As a school and as a community, we stand against any and all policies and legislation that diminishes or threatens the equal rights of all LGBTQI+ individuals. We support the rights that students and all people have to live authentically and have those rights protected - including the right to safety - by institutions, including schools and healthcare practitioners. As an educational institution, our commitment is to foster a safe, open, and equitable environment for learning and support and to uplift our student body and our greater and diverse community.

“We shall walk together on this path of life, for all things are part of the universe and are connected with each other to form one whole unity.” — Maria Montessori, *To Educate the Human Potential*



Here are some resources that can further inform you about these issues and how we can continue supporting our community.

- [This article](#) from the New England Journal of Medicine gives some perspectives of the recent history of these threats.
- This [article from Human Rights Watch](#) notes the challenges being launched in South Dakota.
- [This article from CNN](#) discusses the more recent developments.
- Information about [Fostering Competent Healthcare for Transgender and Non-binary Patients](#).

In solidarity,

Tamara and Marco

To read previous Notes from the Equity, Justice, and Inclusion Director,

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