

# #1479 Torturing Children and Families in the Name of Protecting Them (Trans Rights)

Intro 3-29-22

[00:00:00] **JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** Welcome to this episode of the award-winning *Best of the Left* podcast, in which we should take a look at the current iteration of the cynical culture wars being waged by conservative Republicans against LGBTQ kids for political gain.

The current wave of anti-trans and anti-gay legislation sprouting across the country is not about protecting kids, and it does absolutely nothing new.

Clips today are from *At Liberty*; *CounterSpin*; *Know Your Enemy*; *Democracy Now!*; *Today, Explained*; *DOOMED with Matt Bender* and with additional members-only clips from *At Liberty* and *Know Your Enemy*.

## Protecting Women and Children Is a Shield for Transphobia - At Liberty - Air Date 3-17-22

[00:00:39] **LINDA MORRIS:** To get us started, Nikita, what do you make of this surge in anti-trans legislation across the country and where is it coming from?

[00:00:47] **NIKITA SHEPARD:** Yeah. So as most of the listeners will know, this is a truly horrifying surge of legislation across the entire country that is targeting some of the most vulnerable people in this country, even in places like New Hampshire and Michigan that have in other situations been understood as more LGBTQ friendly. And a particularly odd feature of them is that while some of them are more broadly targeting the LGBTQ+ community, most of them are really honing in on trans people and specifically trans youth. So, yeah, the questions we have to be asking now are like why trans people and trans kids in particular, and why now? What's going on now?

The place that I would locate the start of this particular anti-trans surge is in 2015 in Houston, when there was a local ordinance that would have provided anti-discrimination protections on the basis of gender identity. And there was a campaign called The Campaign for Houston that mobilized under the slogan "No men in women's bathrooms," and managed to successfully prevent this ordinance from going forward. So in 2014, you have the Ferguson uprising, followed by the uprisings in Baltimore and the birth of the Black Lives Matter movement. And in 2015, you have the Supreme Court ruling that legalized same-sex marriage, it seemed like the religious right had lost this battle of the culture war, this shift away from a civil rights framing to a "love is love" kind of emphasis on family, on love and emotion and things like that had been really successful in changing American attitudes about same-sex marriage. So what are they going to do?

These conservative forces were looking for a new wedge, a new angle, a new way to sort of push back against some of the gains that had been made by social movements around gender and sexuality, and also around racial justice. And trans people, and in particular the issue of trans folks in bathrooms, provided a valuable wedge issue for a number of reasons. One, by focusing on a narrower or even smaller segment of the community that was more marginalized and has historically been marginalized -- even among lesbian, gay and bisexual communities -- it was a way to target a demographic that was more vulnerable. It also tied into a perception that's inaccurate: that trans kids, trans young people are something new, that this is something that is sort of like unprecedented, an unprecedented shift, a social experiment in gender norms. And third, it tapped into fears around gender violence, and it's locating the bathroom, the public bathroom as a particular site of imagined gender violence. And if you look at the materials, the sort of promotional materials that were used in this 2015 campaign, there's this advertisement -- really just noxious video advertisement -- of a young white girl in a bathroom stall sort of turning around, and there's this large kind of hairy, darker skinned hand reaching out towards her. Now this fantasy has nothing to do with the reality of trans people trying to use the bathroom. Let's just be clear about that. But what it does have to do with is a long history of using white children and white girls and women in particular, and their fears for safety as a political issue to heighten racial inequality and the marginalization of gender and sexual minorities.

So when that campaign won, I believe that folks on the right, folks in the conservative movement, realized that they could target trans folks and trans youth in particular, as a new culture war issue. So that even if they lost on gay marriage, even if they felt threatened by Black Lives Matter and some of the racial justice movements that were happening, that this was a way that the white, socially conservative base who were anxious about some of these

changes, in particular around gender and sexuality, could be remobilized. And in order to do that, they tapped on this very long history around this politics of protecting children, which we'll go on and talk more about.

## **Andy Marra on Trans Youth Rights - CounterSpin - Air Date 3-4-22**

[00:05:08] **Janine Jackson:** I think for a lot of people, it's like a joke, that you would say that parents who support their child are abusers. And parents who abandon or deny or punish them? Well, they're the healthy ones. But "this is so obviously absurd and hateful that surely nothing will come of it"—that's not really proven such a successful approach.

[00:05:33] **ANDY MARRA:** Well, it's not legally binding, what Abbott and Paxton have both declared, but it is having a profound impact on our young people and their families. People in Texas, as a result of hearing the remarks and the actions taken, they might be afraid to bring their trans children to a doctor now, which is in no one's best interest. Medically necessary care should be accessible, and should be determined by the patient and the healthcare provider, and, unfortunately, the governor and the attorney general are sending the completely opposite message.

Let's talk about the actual effects that this political rhetoric is having on our young people. The Trevor Project, a partner of TLDEF, conducted a report, and they found 86% of LGBTQ young people in this country have said that recent politics has negatively impacted their well-being.

[00:06:41] **Janine Jackson:** There's like 195 state bills proposed in 2022 alone, and it's just March. So we're wrong to say "this is ridiculous." We do have to engage at every level to push back against these bills, even if they're just at a low level, even if they're just maybe not going to bubble up to become actual law, they still are having an effect.

[00:07:10] **ANDY MARRA:** You make a great point about the volume of anti-trans bills that are cropping up in state legislatures across the country. 2021 was no exception. There was a similar number of anti-trans bills introduced in state legislatures, including in the state of Texas. And it's not a mistake, it is not a coincidence. What is happening is the result of a highly coordinated effort by a number of opponents who would seek to harm our young people in this country.

Organizations like the Alliance Defending Freedom and the Heritage Foundation, Concerned Women for America, these organizations have consistently attacked LGBTQ progress in this country, and their latest and greatest strawperson happens to be young people. Not only is that despicable, it's quite frankly putting some of our most vulnerable people in this country at risk. We are putting trans young people in actual risk for their safety and for their well-being. And for parents, there is an incredible amount of fear and confusion about how they can best support their children during these times.

So I just want to underscore, this is not a mistake, this is not a coincidence. This is a highly coordinated effort in an attempt to derail progress in this country, and sadly, for me, from a very infuriating position, the next generation is being attacked and it's downright despicable.

[00:09:00] **Janine Jackson:** Are there any particular things that you would like news media to do more of, or maybe less of, in terms of their reporting on trans issues and these predations on trans people's human rights?

[00:09:18] **ANDY MARRA:** First things first, we need to remember that these attacks are on children and their families. This isn't a trans rights issue, this is an infringement on the rights of families. And we also need to remember that when we talk about gender-affirming care, it's not an ambiguous, abstract concept, it is medically necessary, life-saving care that is backed up by every major medical association in this country.

We know that when trans people of all ages have access to gender-affirming care, it enables trans people to thrive. It improves their health and well being, and I would encourage news outlets across the country to pay attention, and to look for stories that explore more deeply the positive and lasting impacts of healthcare.

Politicians should not have the final say when it comes to who should receive medical care, that is completely up to a doctor. And for media outlets, as well as those of us who consume news, we have to remain skeptical of the political theater and the distraction from politicians like Governor Abbott and the attorney general in Texas.

[00:10:44] **Janine Jackson:** I hear that, and I also hear how crucial intersectionality is, and how often that is missing from reporting, which tends to isolate issues and harms. You can be trans on Monday, but if you're also Black, well, we're going to do that story on Thursday, right? If you have a disability, well that's Sunday. And I really appreciated Gabriel Arkles, senior counsel at

TLDEF, who was reminding folks that things like organizations being allowed to use religious exemptions to deny services to LGBTQ people, that that's especially bad and differently bad for poor people and working-class people, because they're more likely to rely on services that wealthier people can avoid.

And he also noted that, if we're talking about child removal—actually, genuinely taking kids out of families—well, that's a much more real threat for some families than for others. And so I know you know that you can't isolate issues, and if we're talking about responses, we have to talk about intersecting those responses. And this is as true for trans youth as it is for many other folks.

[00:12:01] **ANDY MARRA:** Absolutely. And on the matter of religious exemptions, look, in this country, we not only have civil rights protection, we also have religious exemptions as well. And both of those things have existed in this country for decades. And, look, TLDEF is a proponent and supporter of the Equality Act, which is a piece of federal legislation that would explicitly codify gender identity and sexual orientation as protected classes.

[00:12:35] **Janine Jackson:** And Biden mentioned it, called it out last night.

[00:12:38] **ANDY MARRA:** Absolutely. And we know that with this bill, and also the reality of the Senate's composition, this is an issue that is going to require bipartisan support. Sadly, our opponents, who do not want to see this crucial piece of legislation passed, have twisted very long standing and common sense principles, like religious exemptions, and distorted them to derail progress, more specifically to derail the passage of this bill.

So I would encourage listeners, and particularly media outlets, to delve even deeper on that particular subject, because, look, our opponents are fighting tooth and nail to ensure that either progress is completely derailed, or to slow it down to the fullest extent possible, and, quite frankly, the trans community, but more broadly the LGBTQ+ community, communities of color, communities of faith, would all benefit from this piece of legislation.

## **The Anti-Trans Agenda (w\_ Gillian Branstetter) - Know Your Enemy - Air Date 3-20-22**

[00:13:45] **GILLIAN BRANSTETTER:** So before we get to legislative session, one more pivot point, which was June of 2020, which was a busy

month, you may remember. But there was a critical victory at the Supreme Court for LGBT rights, and *Bostock v. Clayton County*. So these were a collection of cases in which LGBT people, including a transgender woman named Aimee Stephens, were fired from their jobs.

And it was not up for debate whether they were fired for discriminatory reasons. What the Supreme Court was hearing was whether the discrimination they faced was prohibited by Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which prohibits sex discrimination in employment. And the Alliance Defending Freedom, which is this very large conservative, legal powerhouse, which had a lot of its alumni stock throughout the Trump administration and a lot of its alumni put on to lifetime appointments on the federal bench, argued this case and lost six to three, with an opinion coming from Neil Gorsuch -- no, no liberal ninny -- writing in favor of the LGBT workers in this case and ruling in fact that laws that prohibit sex discrimination prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

The Alliance Defending Freedom lost and definitely was not expecting it. You saw people like Carrie Severino calling this deeply unfounded and a massive failure. You saw Senator Josh Hawley calling it "the end of the conservative legal movement," which I think says a lot about how they view the conservative legal movement.

[00:15:18] **SAM ADLER-BELL - HOST, KNOW YOUR ENEMY:** If Gorsuch could use textualism to come to the conclusion that this protection was built into the constitution, then it's all over. What's the point of having this hermeneutic for interpreting the constitution?

[00:15:28] **MATTHEW SITMAN - HOST, KNOW YOUR ENEMY:** I believe, too, that it was later that summer, August of 2020, when Adrian Vermeule published his "Common-Good Conservatism" essay in the Atlantic arguing against originalism. Right? If the rule brought us to this point, why keep following it?

[00:15:42] **GILLIAN BRANSTETTER:** It's almost as if it was just a pretext to come to preordained policy goals. Who's to say?

So walking away from this case, the Alliance Defending Freedom, and really the conservative legal movement as a whole, has been deeply embarrassed. I mean, remember they stole a Supreme -- you know, the conservative legal movement stole a Supreme Court seat from the nation's first black president in order to weigh the dice that they just lost on. To say nothing of -- I mean, this

was after the Kavanaugh fight, right? So in 2020, before that Supreme Court ruling, we saw 79 anti-LGBT bills introduced across the country with very few passing, I think just one or two. Right? Because of that fear that people had from the North Carolina fight that was still instilled in a lot of people.

Then in 2021, after they suffered that Supreme Court loss, you have over 150. So it nearly doubles. And a number gets signed into law, including an athlete ban in Idaho and a ban on updating birth certificates. And then we come to this year where we have surpassed 250 anti-LGBT bills introduced in state legislatures across the country. The vast majority are explicitly targeting transgender students or transgender rights. 29 are bans on gender-affirming care -- a term you're going to hear me use a lot.

Gender-affirming care is an often misunderstood area of medicine, particularly as it applies to kids. But frankly speaking, without getting too much into it, it's helpful to see it separated by age groups. So for example, when an elementary school-aged kid begins wanting to identify as a girl, go to school as a girl, grow their hair out, or identify as a boy or non-binary, they generally aren't receiving any kind of health care. They usually might experience what's called a social transition. And it's just those kinds of affects. It's maybe going by different name at school and maybe trying out new pronouns. But generally speaking, the model that a lot of healthcare workers [who] work with pediatricians broadly have endorsed the affirming model speaks to sort of giving them room to explore, especially when they're that young. It's simply so they have the time to find themselves and be sure if they want to move on to the next step.

So for thinking in middle school, if a child's identifying as trans, they might access what are known [as] puberty blockers. These are entirely reversible means, basically pausing the secondary sexual characteristics that children adopt during puberty.

So it's really just a means of giving families even more time to monitor a child's overall wellbeing, to give them a chance to experience life, basically in this new gender. Right?

And then for transgender adolescence, you might see what's called hormone replacement therapy. So for example, if they're seeking feminizing effects, they would take estrogen as well as a medication to block the body's production of testosterone. Or if they're seeking masculinizing effects, if they're a transgender boy, they might seek out testosterone. And on some extremely rare occasions, older teens, 16, 17 year olds might access gender affirming surgery. But for the most part, that doesn't really happen. And if it does, it's usually among kids who

have been consistently and persistently presenting in their identity for more than a decade.

These are endorsed by the broad mainstream of the medical community, by the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics. They are the result of -- no kidding -- a century of research. Gender affirming care is older than antidepressants.

[00:19:13] **SAM ADLER-BELL - HOST, KNOW YOUR ENEMY:** Are you suggesting to me that those institutions know better what kids need for their health and wellbeing than Josh Hawley?

[00:19:19] **GILLIAN BRANSTETTER:** Dare I? I think, and I lay all that out for the explicit reason that I think that when most people hear the words "transgender" and "healthcare," they immediately lead to surgery. And it's important to understand that when we are talking about kids, especially young kids, they're never really accessing anything that's permanent. And the older teenagers who on very rare occasions are, are generally people who came out at three or four, and have been persistently and consistently presenting. And this healthcare is strongly evidence-based, it's also strongly individualized. It's not a factory, that sort of a conveyor belt.

And it's important to understand that everybody takes these decisions very seriously. Parents do. Healthcare providers do. They're making these decisions in consultation with psychologists, with psychiatrists, actually bringing the school along.

So we've seen 29 bills just this session attempt to ban that care. That care which, by the way, transgender kids are four times as likely to have experienced a suicide attempt as their non-transgender peers. And access to this care decreases it by as much as 70% in some studies, and in fact brings it down to lower rates than their cisgender peers.

So understand that this is the only method we have to treat what is really a mental health crisis amongst transgender teens. And these states are seeking to ban it. One of these already passed in Arkansas. Luckily it is currently blocked from enforcement by a federal judge's order. And then another has been enacted in Texas, but not really through legislation. And we'll get into Texas shortly.

A lot of these other bills, easily the most common one, is focused on trans athletes. I think this in particular has been pitched as an "easy get" for politicians. One that relies on a lot of assumptions about the sex and gender that

people have. You know, I say it tends to be really right for propaganda because most people don't know a transgender person, but unfortunately, most people also don't watch women's sports. So you're lying about a black box within a black box. You're talking about people they haven't met playing sports they largely don't watch. So of course they're more likely to believe that trans women are out there dominating athletic competitions day and night when we know they're not.

## **Chase Strangio on the GOPs Push in Florida, Texas, Idaho to Eradicate Trans Youth & Trans Lives - Democracy Now! - Air Date 3-9-22**

[00:21:43] **JUAN GONZALEZ:** And, Chase, you're an attorney in the case of Doe v. Abbott in Texas. Can you describe that case and what has happened so far?

[00:21:54] **CHASE STRANGIO:** Yeah, I think we really have to understand that there is an absolute crisis in Texas. Families are being terrorized by Governor Abbott's completely extralegal and impermissible directive to the child welfare agency to start investigating families and threatening the general public with criminal prosecution if they do not report trans youth and their families to the child welfare agencies. Right now on the ground, we know that families are being investigated solely because they have transgender children. Teachers are being asked to report transgender children and their families to child welfare authorities, and providers have cut off healthcare across the state. So the practical impact is catastrophic, and people are suffering. We filed a lawsuit to try to block this directive. We are currently in court, in state court in Austin, to try to stop the implementation of this directive at every level, and that litigation continues. But the reality is, is that this national conversation and the actions by the Alabama Legislature, the Florida Legislature and executive officials in Texas is having the effect of making it difficult, if not impossible, for trans young people to survive.

[00:23:01] **AMY GOODMAN:** Texas, Chase, are they threatening to take trans children away from their parents?

[00:23:07] **CHASE STRANGIO:** They are threatening to take trans children away from their parents for the sole and exclusive purpose that their parents are loving and supporting them and providing them with medically necessary,

doctor-recommended healthcare. I cannot stress this enough. They are coming into homes, investigating families, solely because parents love their kids and are providing care consistent with the recommendations of every major medical association in the United States.

[00:23:31] **AMY GOODMAN:** And the significance of what happened on Friday, the Houston-based Texas Children's Hospital, the largest pediatric hospital in the country, announcing it's stopping prescribing gender-affirming hormone therapies?

[00:23:44] **CHASE STRANGIO:** They have cut off care, canceled appointments. And we're talking about lifesaving necessary care. So we have young people who are relying on this care to stabilize their health and well-being. A lot of this care is time-specific, so they are pulling young people off of care that's going to force them into their endogenous puberty. The extent of the fear and trauma is unimaginable right now, and there is very little recourse for many people. So we are fighting with everything we have to stop not only the implementation of these directives, but the fallout from them, because it's not just these large hospitals, but individual providers, because of fear of criminal prosecution if they continue to follow their ethical obligation as doctors to treat their patients.

[00:24:24] **JUAN GONZALEZ:** And, Chase, we only have about a minute left, but I'm wondering if you could talk about some of the legislation occurring in other states, for instance, in Idaho, Iowa or Utah?

[00:24:35] **CHASE STRANGIO:** Yeah, I think I just want to highlight briefly that both Idaho and Alabama currently have felony bans on healthcare pending. So, if those bills pass — in Alabama, there's one vote left in the House. In Idaho, it has to make it to the Senate. These are bills that also would be similarly catastrophic for trans people. And we already have such a bill that thankfully we enjoined in Arkansas, but our litigation continues there, and of course there's dozens of bills across the country still pending.

[00:25:01] **AMY GOODMAN:** And specifically in Idaho, what you are most concerned about happening there?

[00:25:07] **CHASE STRANGIO:** You know, I'm concerned that this bill passes, and all care is cut off. And not only is it cut off, that bill would make it a felony with potential life imprisonment not only to treat people in state, but you take someone out of state to get the treatment. What are families supposed to

do? And as a parent, I simply cannot imagine what it must feel like to face criminal prosecution to try to keep your kid alive.

[00:25:28] **AMY GOODMAN:** And how many bills like this have been introduced around the country, Chase?

[00:25:33] **CHASE STRANGIO:** We are facing a context now where over 35 states have introduced bills targeting transgender young people. Thankfully, we are able to stop some of them, but we are continuing to fight to the very end of these legislative sessions because there is an aggressive push to move these quickly through state legislatures.

## **Protecting Women and Children Is a Shield for Transphobia Part 2 - At Liberty - Air Date 3-17-22**

[00:25:48] **LINDA MORRIS:** And I really do want to talk to you about what happens in the 1970s. You know, you wrote in The Washington Post about how the weaponization of white womanhood and also this, the politics of protection, really came into play when we were talking about efforts to justify welfare cuts and restrictions on reproductive health that disproportionately impacted communities of color. And I would love to just hear more about what happened there.

[00:26:14] **NIKITA SHEPARD:** Sure. So what conservative movements found was that child protection was a really powerful rhetoric. It was versatile. It could be applied to a lot of different situations and a lot of different political agendas, but it could mobilize their base by touching into that almost kind of primal instinct that many parents have to protect their children. And of course, that's pretty reasonable, who wouldn't want to protect their children, right? But unfortunately, this language in its political use has had really toxic, really harmful effects. And one of the key turning points in that came in 1977, where this woman named Anita Bryant, who was sort of like a Christian pop star and orange juice spokeswoman, decided that she was going to enter the political fray in Miami-Dade County, Florida, when a group of gay activists had been attempting to pass an anti-discrimination ordinance for the county that would have protected gay men and lesbians against discrimination.

Now it's important to say a word about the racial politics that are going on here. So in early lesbian and gay movements often adopted the sort of paradigms and

language of the Black freedom struggle and civil rights movement in order to sort of make sense of how gay men and lesbians could make political claims. Now this is sort of a double edged sword, because on the one hand, it can create a powerful basis for solidarity across lines of difference between white gay men and lesbians and African-Americans of many sexual orientations. On the other hand, it can also take an appropriated form in which white, lesbian and gay activists sort of act as if they have a similar kind of oppression to African-Americans when they simply don't. And this was one of the dynamics that was playing out in Florida in 1977, where a mostly white coalition of lesbian and gay activists were using some of the civil rights rhetoric that was sort of cut and pasted from black freedom and other ethnic liberation struggles in ways that were sort of uncomfortable and inappropriate. And Anita Bryant figured out a very strategically powerful way to tap into this by combining these racial tensions with the language of child protection. She started a campaign called 'Save Our Children' and argued that homosexuals, because they cannot reproduce, have to recruit. And the way that they recruit is by targeting children, by preying on children. And it was really powerful and it was really successful. The ordinance was overturned by a popular vote of a landslide, and it set in motion this huge backlash that I think is actually very similar to the backlash we're seeing today. What you'll find is a common theme in many of these is that these supposedly child protection-oriented campaigns have disproportionate effects on communities of color. We see that with welfare debates, we see that with mass incarceration policies, all these sorts of policies that even when they are supported by a multiracial constituency, have these very harmful effects. And so, the religious right found that they'd hit upon a really powerful formula. And that is exactly what we're seeing today from 2015 to the present. We're seeing these conservative movements recognizing that by frightening people into thinking that their children are under threat, you can push a really wide range of agendas.

[00:30:00] **LINDA MORRIS:** Yeah, wow, that's an incredibly important reminder that these attacks are so incredibly linked to these other issue areas, that oftentimes it sounds like conservative politics are really looking at these anti-trans bills as part of a broader campaign to pass probably other harmful measures that disproportionately harm Black and brown folks, that disproportionately harm poor people.

**Dont Say Gay - Today, Explained - Air  
Date 3-17-22**

[00:30:26] **SEAN:** The first thing you gotta know about Florida's "Don't Say Gay" bill is that it's not actually called "Don't Say Gay."

[00:30:32] **DANIELLE PRIEUR:** No, it's the Parental Rights in Education bill.

[00:30:36] **SEAN:** Danielle Prieur is a reporter with 90.7 WMFE – public radio in Orlando. She's been covering the story.

[00:30:44] **DANIELLE PRIEUR:** The idea is that parents should have more rights to decide what children learn in classrooms. It's a big push of Governor DeSantis and Republicans here in the state of Florida. The idea is that parents should have some say in whether kids are learning about things that are considered age appropriate or inappropriate, depending on which camp you're in.

[00:31:09] **SENATOR DENNIS BAXLEY:** So I think we've strengthened parental involvement to say, look, you're in charge, and so we're going to protect your rights to be in charge and give you some tools in which to carry that out.

[00:31:22] **SEAN:** Turns out this isn't the first time Florida has tried to censor what schools can talk about in the classroom.

[00:31:28] **DANIELLE PRIEUR:** We've seen bills like, 'Don't Say Gay.' We've seen bills like the Stop WOKE Act, a bill that's also on its way to the governor's desk and that bans critical race theory in classrooms and bans conversations about history that makes students uncomfortable. So if you think about teaching slavery in classrooms or the civil rights movement or things like that, you would have to be very careful about how you talk about certain things and the activities that you do to teach that history so as not to make someone quote "uncomfortable". We've seen bills here in Florida which are all trying to decide what kids learn, what they can discuss, and what they can read in classrooms, whether that's talking about LGBTQ people or Black and Brown people.

[00:32:15] **SEAN:** And what is the parental rights in education bill or 'Don't Say Gay' explicitly say about, I don't know, saying "gay," I guess?

[00:32:23] **DANIELLE PRIEUR:** You know, it's so vague, Sean. It really is. It's this idea that kids in kindergarten through third grade classrooms won't be able to discuss gender identity and sexuality.

[00:32:33] **TAMPA BAY 10:** So the bill, at its core, prohibits schools from discouraging or prohibiting parental notification and involvement in critical decisions that affect a student's mental, emotional or physical well-being, but it is the clause about restrictions on teaching LGBTQ topics that's gotten the most attention.

[00:32:49] **DANIELLE PRIEUR:** So that could mean so many different things. It could mean a kindergartner maybe couldn't read a book about someone having two mommies and two daddies. Or it could be a second grade classroom, if they usually do one of those family tree craft projects, that will they be able to talk about their transgender brother or sister when they're displaying their family tree proudly in the classroom? And another part is that even the older kids, in middle school and high school, won't be able to talk about LGBTQ content if it's considered quote "age inappropriate."

[00:33:23] **TAMPA BAY 10:** Initially, the bill's language said that schools could not encourage discussion, but that was criticized for being way too broad so discussion was changed to instruction.

[00:33:33] **DANIELLE PRIEUR:** Also, the bill allows schools and school districts to "out" a child to their parent or guardian. So if a child was to talk to a teacher or a counselor and say, "Hey, I think I might be gay," or "I think I might be trans," districts, unless this information would cause harm in some way to the child, are required to share that with families.

[00:33:55] **TAMPA BAY 10:** But the bill's sponsor did file a controversial amendment that would have essentially erased that exception. That amendment, however, was withdrawn before the vote on the bill.

[00:34:05] **SEAN:** How much are schools and children talking about sexual orientation and gender identity in kindergarten through the third grade, as it is?

[00:34:14] **DANIELLE PRIEUR:** I would assume not much. I was a high school teacher, actually, before I was a journalist, and I can tell you that the only time we really talked about those issues, at least in my English classroom, is it would come up in books. So there would be gay characters, there would be trans characters in books, but other than that, not much.

I could imagine maybe a history teacher would talk about maybe LGBTQ civil rights history, Stonewall, Harvey Milk, that sort of thing, but I can't imagine, especially in the lower grades, unless, like I said, it's in a book or maybe in a

movie or something like that, but even then, I would assume it would be pretty rare.

[00:34:52] **SEAN:** What does the bill say about what happens if a teacher does bring up sexual orientation or gender identity in, say, a third grade classroom? What happens to that teacher?

[00:35:03] **DANIELLE PRIEUR:** So basically, it opens the door for lawsuits, unsurprisingly, and so school districts and school boards, I think, are very nervous right now to see what will happen if a parent decides, "You know what, my child read a book about gay people in class and I'm upset about this, and now I'm going to sue the school districts, sue the school board." Whether that will be found to hold water or not is uncertain at this time, but I think it's a concern. Unfortunately, it'll probably have a chilling effect on teachers when they're lesson planning.

[00:35:33] **SEAN:** Unlike the Stop WOKE Act, though, which I suppose we've been seeing stuff like that against critical race theory across the country. Now, Governor DeSantis and other legislators in Florida want to police conversations about queerness, and last time I checked, there are a whole lot of queer people in Florida.

[00:35:54] **DANIELLE PRIEUR:** There are. There are. And there's even out people in the state legislature, some of whom you've seen, like Carlos Guillermo Smith, who has been fighting against this 'don't say gay' bill for months now...

[00:36:06] **CARLOS GUILLERMO SMITH:** there is nothing inappropriate about visibility for LGBTQ families. LGBTQ Floridians are a healthy and normal part of every society and of every school.

[00:36:20] **DANIELLE PRIEUR:** ...and is really concerned about how this is going to affect LGBTQ kids' mental health. We know that those kids tend to have higher rates of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation. They also tend to have higher rates of homelessness. So I think he's really concerned and a lot of LGBTQ advocates in the state are really concerned about, if you are telling kids that innately who they are is inappropriate and making them scared to come out in schools, what is this going to do to this very, very vulnerable set of kids throughout the state?

## **Behind the Transphobic Hate Campaigns (and Steven Crowder) on College**

# Campuses in Texas (w\_ Steven Monacelli)

## Part 1 - DOOMED with Matt Binder - Air Date 3-23-22

[00:36:53] **MATT BINDER - HOST, DOOMED W/ MATT BINDER:** So you guys go into it and why don't you... You already spoke a little bit about it, but what was his argument on this? Cause this is basically just the Right doesn't think that trans women should play in sports where they are competing against people who match their gender identity. That's their whole argument, and they believe that it gives these trans women a competitive edge, even though again, the only, as far as I've researched and I've heard about this topic for many, many years on various different college sports, and every time they're worried about some competitive edge where the trans woman ends up coming in 9th, 10th, 15th, 20th, not even on the lineup page list. This is the first time that I know of where a trans woman has actually been able to compete with the cisgender woman in that particular sport.

[00:37:51] **STEVEN MONACELLI:** He pulled out some statistics, I don't know where they came from, I think you may have heard them in the audio, something about 60% of sports that transgender people... Something about they win all the time, basically, that was the argument. This competitive advantage argument, which I don't think really, as you said, bears out with a lot of scrutiny. Furthermore, it's embedded in a very, not only setting gender aside, a sex-essentialist mindset of there's only two sexes and that everybody has to fit into one of them, and that doing anything to change in order to match your gender expression and quite literally potentially save people's lives, in terms of their psychological health, they basically want to say those people aren't women and therefore should not compete with women.

They want to more or less continue to create buckets for people and then essentialize them in those buckets and say only people can play like with like basically. They bring up arguments of, "why do we have male and female sports?" and I'm like, "well, I think there's a long history of reasons for that, and there's some interesting arguments around that", but their desire, when you get to what the solution is, it's not really one of inclusion. It's not like they're saying let's create a sort of area of sports where anyone compete against anyone and actually make it about what's human excellence or whatever, versus we should continue to create these subdivisions of people, and we should do these really invasive examinations, like borderline Gatica examinations, in order for you to just compete.

[00:39:25] **MATT BINDER - HOST, DOOMED W/ MATT BINDER:** You could literally, on that little banner he's got, he's got a women's sports in big red letters, but you could just, literally...

[00:39:34] **STEVEN MONACELLI:** It wasn't Olympic. He didn't even attempt to qualify his statement of, should be like these super, super high stakes money-making sports where that's what it's become. He made a very grand argument of, "should it be sports?" and I'm like, "man, what the fuck are sports about? What is the point of sports?" and he said, "to win." I thought to myself that tells me so much about you more than it tells me about sports.

[00:40:00] **MATT BINDER - HOST, DOOMED W/ MATT BINDER:** I'm sure if you asked a very large percentage, I'm not going to put a number on it, but very large percentage of people with similar ideologies to Steven Crowder, i.e. conservatives, the right, whatever you want to call them, they probably would say the same exact thing.

## **Protecting Women and Children Is a Shield for Transphobia Part 3 - At Liberty - Air Date 3-17-22**

[00:40:16] **LINDA MORRIS:** You know, I wanted to also ask you, do you think that the media, and even advocates who are opposing these measures, that are opposing these attacks on the trans community, are playing a role in any way in validating the narratives that we've been talking about? And if so, what do you think should be considered for media or advocates or just anyone who's talking about these issues?

[00:40:41] **NIKITA SHEPARD:** Yeah, that's an excellent question. And it's a complicated one. Because it's very tempting to just want to flip the rhetoric and be like, well you know, Greg Abbott says he's protecting children from child abuse. No, we're protecting children, because we're providing them the care that they need. And that's understandable, and I wouldn't necessarily criticize it. But the problem is, again, as we've seen, so long as we're in this discourse of protecting children, more often than not it's going to be turned to political purposes that are not actually aligned with what we want. I would want to hear from a wide range of activists and legal workers and stuff about what's been effective in different contexts.

But for myself, what I would say, I think children need less protection and more empowerment. Less protection and more empowerment. So what I mean by that is if we're giving parents more rights and more power to wield, it doesn't keep their children safer. In many cases, it's quite the opposite. So an example is this provision that thankfully didn't make it into the final version of the Florida 'Don't Say Gay' bill, but it's still in bills in Arizona and Alabama that are pending that would mandate school officials who learn about a student's gender or sexual identity to disclose this to their parents. And you know, those of us who grew up in the South in some of these settings know that this can be literally fatal to young people, literally fatal.

So again and similarly, protecting children from information about things like sexuality and gender doesn't keep them safe, it's directly responsible for massive amounts of harm, ranging from STIs, unplanned pregnancies, sexual violence to poor self-esteem, isolation, self-harm, all these sorts of things. So I just think that protection is the wrong way to think about it. I think that empowerment is a much more promising way to think about how we should relate to young people and LGBTQ and transgender people in particular.

And so part of that's a shift in sort of how we talk about it, but it's also a shift in sort of how we think about political organizing. So I want to really highlight at this moment, in the last week or two, these student walkouts that have been happening in Florida that have been initiated by youth, led by youth. And it's building off of this broader pattern of youth mobilization against gun violence, against racist police murders, against COVID policies that have put young people at risk. So we're seeing a real surge in youth-led youth activism. And one of the things that we can be doing in addition to our work, challenging these bills in legislatures, is really trying to highlight and uplift that youth-led organizing that recognizes youth empowerment, and not just child protection, as one of the things that's most likely to actually create real lasting safety and social justice.

[00:43:31] **LINDA MORRIS:** Oh, I love that so much, just the shift from talking about protection to empowerment and talking about autonomy and agency for young people is so important. Thank you so much for that framing. I think that's incredible. And you know, I think just as in closing, many of our listeners care deeply about trans justice and about the issues that we've been talking about and want to find ways to get involved and fighting for trans rights and fighting for gender justice.

# Behind the Transphobic Hate Campaigns (and Steven Crowder) on College Campuses in Texas (w\_ Steven Monacelli) Part 2 - DOOMED with Matt Binder - Air Date 3-23-22

[00:44:01] **MATT BINDER - HOST, DOOMED W/ MATT BINDER:** Well, then that sort of goes against them. The idea then that you care so much and are spending so much time trying to litigate this issue that is not going to affect literally 99.95% of people in this country. How many student athletes across the country are there and how many of them are actually in a league with a transgender person?

[00:44:26] **STEVEN MONACELLI:** That's what I asked him and he couldn't answer that because it's not actually that... Not only do I fundamentally disagree that the premise is there is even a problem...

[00:44:36] **MATT BINDER - HOST, DOOMED W/ MATT BINDER:** The whole premise is dumb, but even in their own world it's absurd. And notice too that they only have the problem with transgender women competing in sports with cis-gender women, but there's never a problem when it's transgender men competing in men's sports, because it's not about that, they can't really win that one.

[00:44:57] **STEVEN MONACELLI:** Look, a super masculine guy like Crowder, he would never get beaten by a trans man in sport. That's the mindset. That's what they think to themselves, that's why they don't think it's a problem. They don't feel threatened because they're so full of themselves, it's like chauvinism.

[00:45:14] **MATT BINDER - HOST, DOOMED W/ MATT BINDER:** And then there's that situation where, his name totally, I can't remember right now, but it's a very famous case where this transgender man college student was a collegiate wrestler and wanting to compete against the men, but the league wouldn't let him because he's a trans man and forced him to compete against women because that's how they viewed him. And he would defeat the other women while at the same time protesting how stupid this is. He doesn't want to face women, he wants to face other men because he's a trans man, he's a man.

Conservatives would be so confused by that one, because they jump in and say that person should not be competing against the women. Well, really? That doesn't fit with what you're saying for the other cases. So either you think trans people should compete with other people who match their gender identity or you don't, it's not only when you're not happy with how that's going because the trans person is doing really well in whatever sport league that is.

[00:46:30] **STEVEN MONACELLI:** Well, I think the reality is they functionally either don't want them to compete at all or they think they can get away with arguing, "oh yeah. Well, they should compete in this third category or this fourth category," knowing, well, that that's a bullshit argument, because they're not going to actually support investing in creating those leagues and all of that stuff. So functionally it's the same argument. They basically just don't care and don't want these people to compete, and I think that's just exclusionary at the end of the day. That's how I view it.

[00:47:06] **MATT BINDER - HOST, DOOMED W/ MATT BINDER:** The trans wrestler, by the way, is Mack Beggs. He wanted to compete against other men and they wouldn't let him because his birth certificate said he was a woman, a girl, and they were unhappy with that, when that's exactly the opposite of what they weren't happy with in the case of Leah Thomas. They just don't want trans people involved in anything. They want them shunned from society is really what it's all.

[00:47:27] **STEVEN MONACELLI:** It's so strange with the elevation of certain hormones or certain types of things over others. So I'm gonna look up the runner that I mentioned, Caster Semenya. So people had complained that Caster Semenya shouldn't be able to compete, it's unfair they're winning and winning and winning. They forced all these tests and they did all this eugenics garbage and elevated testosterone and estrogen as these molecules and these hormones above other functional systems like lactic acid, which is why I mentioned Michael Phelps earlier. You can look at Caster Semenya and you can look at Michael Phelps and you can say, hey, these are interesting people. They're both outliers for reasons that it's just natural mutation, and we've got curves of distributions. Sometimes you end up having someone who not only can produce less lactic acid, but they're super fucking tall and have a crazy wingspan. Or you've got someone who can produce more testosterone that's a woman and can run. And frankly, I think there's some red flags as to why Caster was singled out and not someone like Michael Phelps.

[00:48:36] **MATT BINDER - HOST, DOOMED W/ MATT BINDER:** Well, the very obvious ones, yes.

[00:48:39] **STEVEN MONACELLI:** Quite obvious ones. And so that's why I brought up these edge cases with him to begin with, because you can't just cast this gigantic binary net on things, you're going to literally erase people, and then you're going to put yourself in these stupid contradictory situations where you look ridiculous because you're doing this all for the sake of having and maintaining an exclusionary system.

## **Andy Marra on Trans Youth Rights - CounterSpin - Air Date 3-4-22**

[00:49:03] **Janine Jackson:** Let me just ask you, finally: One of the things I liked about another piece I read from Gabriel Arkles was the reminder that courts, not even the Supreme Court, [don't] have the final say on an issue, the people do. And I think you've just touched on it, but if you could just say, where would you like to see people using their voice? It's easy to get discouraged when we see things like Governor Abbott and those statements, and it's easy to get confused about what actual impact that can have, and then, even if it's not law, it still has an impact. What would you have listeners do to make their voices heard on this set of issues?

[00:49:46] **ANDY MARRA:** I have received numerous emails and phone calls over the past several days related to developments in Texas, and I have been on the phone for many hours with our colleagues on the ground. And a lot of folks are asking: "What can I do in this moment? How can I be of help when it feels like there is nothing that can be done?" And I would say, pick up your phone, or go on your computer, and call or contact your US senator and call on them to pass the Equality Act.

There's a crucial need for federal protections in this country that would not only strengthen existing civil rights laws in the United States, but would also expand them to include deeply marginalized community members. And for TLDEF, and for me as a trans woman, as a trans woman of color, it matters when the president gets up in front of the world and delivers the State of the Union that calls on his colleagues in Congress to pass the Equality Act. That matters. And for listeners that are looking for one thing to do in support of trans equality, I would encourage you all to contact your US senator right now and call on them to pass the Equality Act.

# Protecting Women and Children Is a Shield for Transphobia Part 4 - At Liberty - Air

## Date 3-17-22

[00:51:18] **LINDA MORRIS:** Could you talk a little bit more about how these recent attacks on the trans community are directly related to race and white supremacy and what those historical roots are?

[00:51:29] **NIKITA SHEPARD:** Absolutely. So to back up a little bit, throughout the modern history of the United States, there have been two main categories of people who've been singled out for being in need of protection, which is white women and children broadly, particularly white children. And there's always been a lot of intertwining of the discourses around these two particular groups, but they also have distinct histories, and I'll try to talk a little bit about that.

So while protection of women has been a theme for a very long time, protection of children is actually historically considerably more recent. While in much of the country in the 20s, 30s into the 1940s, this rhetoric of child protection was sort of gaining steam, in the south during the Jim Crow era, it was much more common and much more of a political focus to have a discourse of protecting white women. This was the nominal justification, the reason that was given for a massive amount of the racial terror lynchings that happened from particularly the 1880s all the way up into the 1950s. Now, it's important to be clear that this was not the actual reason why these attacks were happening, but this was the discourse that was given to justify them. The actual reasons often had more to do with suppressing labor organizing or preventing Black political organizing, or economic competition, upholding racial etiquette, these sorts of things. But the imperative to protect white women, supposedly from African-American men in particular, was the justification for this massive amount of political violence.

So this is sort of the back story as we get into the mid 20th century. Now with World War II and then with the subsequent Cold War, the rhetoric around children shifts a little bit from sort of like protection in child welfare towards children as sort of like symbols of democracy, symbols of American freedom. Now this starts to become a particular problem in the 1950s, when you have the rise of the Black freedom struggle and the civil rights movement in the South. In the 1950s, you had a major uptick of organizing in the South. And one of the catalysts to this in 1955, was the lynching of Emmett Till. Emmett Till was a 14-year-old Black child from Chicago who was in Mississippi visiting family and was brutally murdered. And his mother had an open casket funeral and his

quite brutally mangled body became part of the visual culture of the 1950s. And it really catalyzed this huge amount of horror and shock and scrutiny about the impact of white supremacy in the South. And so it was one of those moments where this discourse of, Oh, what this violence is actually about is protecting white women began to be really challenged because it was coming into conflict with these other discourses about protecting children. And this was driven home especially sharply in 1963, when a group of white supremacists from the Ku Klux Klan bombed a church in Birmingham and four young Black girls were killed. This represented the absolute moral low point of the segregationist South, in which there was just absolutely no way that people of any conscience could justify the social system that folks were trying to protect through this kind of violence, when these children who had nothing to do with anything were brutally murdered. So it's this moment in the 1950s and 1960s where child protection on one hand, and the protection of white women in this idealized way in the South, were coming into conflict.

Now, there is another key turning point that happened in the 50s that marks the origin of some of the conservative strategies that we're still seeing today. And that came in the aftermath of the Brown versus Board of Education decision in which the Supreme Court ruled that public schools had to desegregate with all due speed. Now, as we know, that desegregation never really happened in practice, but it was at least an imperative that was challenging the white supremacist norms of segregation in the South. So in the aftermath of that, a massive white supremacist political campaign that was known as "massive resistance" began to unfold. And while this was led in Washington by political representatives from the South who signed this thing called the Southern Manifesto, saying that there's no way we're not going to integrate. On the ground in local communities, a lot of this organizing was led by white women who were invested in using this position as mothers, as a way of having a moral platform for which to argue against desegregation. So during this period in the mid-50s, late 50s and into the 1960s, you have a lot of activism around mothers and parents of children arguing that to protect their children, we had to keep racial segregation in place, making arguments on the basis of Black children's supposed inferiority or penchant for disease or violence or things like that. And so lots of these women who were resentful about the way that imperative to protect white womanhood was being displaced used this rhetoric of child protection and turned it towards white supremacist purposes. But with the gains of the civil rights movement, particularly into the 1960s, with the passage of the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act and with the moral delegitimizing of segregation and white supremacy in Jim Crow that happened around this time, there began to be a shift where some of these activists who were using this language of child protection in a more explicitly racial way began to shift their rhetoric, and they began to shift it into a more race-neutral direction. In this,

they started talking about things like parental rights, school choice, these sorts of things that they don't say anything about whiteness in them, but in practice, they have a lot to do with protecting segregation and protecting the rights of white parents and protecting white children. And that sets the stage for the 1970s with the real emergence of the religious right and the conservative movement in the form of child protection rhetoric that we're more familiar with today.

## **The Anti-Trans Agenda (w\_ Gillian Branstetter) Part 2 - Know Your Enemy - Air Date 3-20-22**

[00:58:15] **MATTHEW SITMAN - HOST, KNOW YOUR ENEMY:** It's been telling to the Joe Biden's nominee for Assistant Secretary for Health, Rachel Levine, how much of like a butt of conservative jokes and nasty conservative rhetoric she's been.

[00:58:30] **GILLIAN BRANSTETTER:** Yes. So in a past life, I was a healthcare reporter in Pennsylvania, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and I had the pleasure of covering, Dr. Levine when she was Secretary of Health in the state of Pennsylvania. Dr. Levine is somebody who cut her teeth in the peak of the AIDS crisis in the 1980s. She founded one of the largest pediatric mental health clinics in the country and led Pennsylvania through an opioid crisis, as well as the Coronavirus pandemic. So she seemed quite naturally like --

[00:58:59] **MATTHEW SITMAN - HOST, KNOW YOUR ENEMY:** A very well-qualified person for this job.

[00:59:02] **GILLIAN BRANSTETTER:** Right. And during her confirmation hearing, I remember there were questions about -- this was February of 2021 -- how do we keep schools open? How do we address vaccine hesitancy? And Democrats and Republicans had very sincere questions about the policy she's looking into enact. And then we get to Senator Rand Paul. And the first two words out of his mouth are "genital mutilation" and how she, as a transgender woman, defends practices -- that is quite earlier -- of providing gender affirming care to trans youth. But I think that piques a lot of people's attention to her nomination, because I think it was a new lowering of the bar for the way that conservatives needed to regard transgender people.

The propaganda that Senator Paul was saying -- I was unfortunately not a stranger to, I had seen it, but I was used to seeing it in The Federalist or in the Daily Caller, Breitbart. The mainstreaming of it, Rachel Levine has unfortunately been a major target of that, to the point that now anytime she gets any accolade, there is a virulent reaction to it that feels almost guttural and instinctual.

I, for one, I'm a fan of pointing out, how consistently it's incompetent men decrying a competent woman; that this is, broadly speaking, a different form of misogyny, trans misogyny, but misogyny all the same. I'm thinking of Dr. Levine's resume and remembering that she's getting criticized on Twitter by Ken Paxton, whose job before attorney general was a corporate lawyer at JC Penney.

So I think even in reports from folks who study radicalization -- there was a report by the Institute for Radicalization and De-radicalization Studies that looked into the activity of white nationalists in the first 100 days of the Biden administration. And they cited the nomination of the assistant secretary looking as a particular flashpoint. And they feel -- the white nationalists -- that transphobia is an effective gateway drug into broader, more extreme viewpoints because it's treated as more acceptable in broad society and is already present in mainstream conservative circles.

## Summary 3-29-22

[01:01:17] **JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** We've just heard clips today, starting with at Liberty connecting the current surge of anti-trans legislation to the history of using women and children as excuses to maintain oppressive systems. CounterSpin explained that parents who support their children are being framed as abusers for following the medical care guidelines supported by all of the U S medical established.

No, your enemy looked at the conservative legal strategy in the courts and the way supporting trans health improves lives and prevent suicides democracy now explained to the way Texas families are being terrorized by new anti-trans laws at Liberty highlighted the strategy of frightening parents to maintain oppression today explained it, dove into the don't say gay bill and.

Doomed with Matt bender in two clips, discuss the knots anti-trans conservatives tie themselves into simply to maintain a bullshit exclusionary system at Liberty reframed the discussion from protecting children to empowering them. And CounterSpin highlighted the single most powerful call

to action, which is to pressure the Senate to pass the equality act links, to more details on.

Our in our show notes and that's what everyone heard. But members also heard bonus clips from Liberty diving into the deep history of using women and children to uphold racial oppression and know your enemy. Look at the evidence that anti-trans misogyny can be a gateway to white nationalists. To hear that and have all of our bonus content delivered seamlessly into your new members.

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## **Dynamics of our political parties - Craig from Ohio**

[01:03:13] **VOICEMAILER: CRAIG FROM OHIO:** Yeah. Hey Jay, this is Craig from Ohio, and I just felt compelled to weigh in on the conversation that you had with Alex, from Maryland about the dynamic between the two parties and then the internal diameter. And the democratic party, because it's something I've been agonizing over for literally decades at this point, I'm sure a lot of your listeners feel the same way because it's a real puzzle and the way I think about it, I just thought I would tell you my, the way I look at it is that the two parties are made up of factions and they're on the left, in the Democratic coalition. The two major factions are the, what I call the liberals, which would be the moderates, the centrist corporatists, and then the Progressive's and on the right, the dynamic is authoritarians and the establishment. So the corporate more, you know, Mitch McConnell types but the way this shakes out, and by the way, you can look at how this breaks down by numbers because the pew research center does a survey of the American electorate every few years, the latest one was in November. And if you look on how they describe the various thinking of the ideologies of the different voters, you'll see that on the left. Liberals dominate.

I mean, what you might call a typical progressive in the mold of a Bernie Sanders or AOC, we only make up maybe 12 to 15% of the democratic electorate rather than the other side, on the right the authoritarian. Right? So the hardcore theocrats they make up, I think I'm much, you know, almost 90% of that coalition.

So anyways, the way the, what happens then is is this shakes out, the liberals, since they dominate not only the party, they dominate the media. So when progressives try to take a stand. They get vilified by the liberal majority and that vilification is amplified through the media.

So then the last thing I want to do mention is that I totally agree with you that with the right. the threat couldn't be more profound. I actually think it's an existential threat for the democracy for the country, for the planet. So we're as progressive given those dynamics, we're really in a bind.

I don't know what to do about it. I'm hoping we can wait and this dynamic will change. But basically I agree with you. Progressive's just have to accept that we are in the minority. We really can't challenge the liberal majority because they pretty much own the platform and the media and the megaphone.

But we have to fight against the right, because the threat coming from the right is. Really unthinkable that they might gain control, so, okay. That's it. Thanks a lot for hearing me out. Bye-bye.

## **Final comments on the divides within American political parties**

[01:06:17] **JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** Thanks to all those who called into the voicemail line or wrote in their messages to be played as a VoicedMails. If you'd like to leave a comment or question of your own to be played on the show, you can record a message at 2 0 2 9 9 9 3 9 9 1. Or write me a message to Jay at Best of the Left dot com.

First, another quick reminder, that there are resources on the equality act linked in the show notes. So please check those out. Second. Don't forget to join our growing discord community and add your thoughts to the discussion happening there. Find a link in the show notes for details on how to join. And third, as in thoughts on Craig's voicemail that we just heard about the dynamics of the parties.

And the first thought I had was a very minor quibble, just that I would break up the, the. Inter party or intra party divisions more than Craig did. Craig sort of broke it up into like two major categories for each party. I would have said at least three for the Democrat. But I went and searched around a little bit for details on the pew study that Craig was referencing and in PR wrote a decent article that doesn't really editorialize much, just sort of presents the findings and

they show that the pew research breaks up America broadly, you know, spanning both parties and out of those parties.

Into our nine distinct groups. And that sounds about right. So from the article, feel like you don't fit in either political party. Here's why from NPR, it just starts out explaining that Americans are divided not just by party, but also within them enough. So for pew to sort Americans ideologically into nine distinct categories, one more fan in its last typology four years ago with some decidedly different contours.

So we, we, I guess we used to be eight categories. And now we're nine, but skipping ahead, I mean, you should go read the article if you want to understand all the different types of Americans, but the paragraph or the sentence, even that stuck out to me that helps explain the Democrats the best, I think is the.

Pew notes that in past topologies, it has found cracks among democratic groups on social issues like abortion same-sex marriage and legalizing marijuana, but those no longer exist. Instead. Now the divides are about how liberal the party should be and quote. And now to quibble with that, I would say that the phrase, how liberal the party should be.

That phrase is doing a lot of work. And the work it is doing is describing the present day issues that divide the democratic party in the same way that abortion same-sex marriage and legalizing marijuana used to divide the democratic party, but no longer does. And so it's how liberal the party should be.

You could use that same phrase to describe. The Democrats, you know, 10 or 20 years ago when abortion same-sex marriage and legalizing marijuana were issues that divided the party. So to me, the standout lesson is not about how divided or on what the party is or the left generally is, but that, that is always going to change as particularly the social issues come, you know, from the progressive perspective.

And into the main stream. So getting to Craig's point and his concerns about, you know, progressive as being a small minority and the liberals being the dominant group and you know, all of that, especially in the media and everything, the goal shouldn't be not because it wouldn't be nice, but because it's just not going to happen.

And isn't a worthwhile goal. I don't think the goal shouldn't be to change how people label themselves. I mean, People who label themselves as sort of

moderates or, or, you know, corporate liberals or whatever. We don't need them to change their labeling identity to progressive. It would be nice, but that's a goal that is very unlikely to be achieved.

It's akin to asking a person to change their identity. And we could go on for days about why beliefs that are tied to one's identity are the hardest change. I don't like changing their identity. It's sort of a fundamental human thing. The goal instead, I think should be to punch above our weight in terms of influence and move the Overton window so that moderate liberals can continue to feel.

Perfectly comfortable in their liberal moderation while also coming to support reparations and universal health care and the green new deal and every other progressive issue that seems extreme today, but will become common sense within the next 20 years. I mean, abortion, same sex, marriage and marijuana legalization.

We're all extremely contentious issue. When I started producing this podcast and I'm not even 40 years old yet though, I am getting dangerously close. So no one should feel discouraged about the ability of Progressive's to get their ideas into the mainstream in a relatively short period of time, a little ironically, it is exactly our impatience that helps push our ideas so far, so fast.

So keep being impatient publicly. I think take private comfort in our proven track record of making progress. Not fast enough by any stretch, uh, maybe not fast enough to, you know, divert the worst impacts of climate change and all that. And I'm sympathetic to all of those concerns, but total despair over our complete inability to make progress.

I think. Wildly unwarranted as always keep the comments coming in at 2029993991. Or by emailing me to Jay at Best of left.com, I would love to hear your thoughts on this or any other issue. Thanks to everyone for listening. Thanks to Deon Clark and Erin Clayton for their research work for the show and participation in our bonus episodes.

Thanks to the Monosyllabic, Transcriptionist Trio, Ben, Ken, and Scott for their volunteer work, helping put our transcripts together. Thanks to Amanda Hoffman for all of her work on our social media outlets, activism, segments, graphic designing web mastering, and bonus show co-hosting. And thanks to those who support the show by becoming a member or purchasing gift memberships at Best of the Left dot com slash support through our Patriot.

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