

TRANS FREEDOM ALLIANCE
THREAT BRIEFING

The Battleground Map

How Anti-Trans Attacks Are Landing Across TFA's Priority States — and How Campaigns Should Answer

The largest paid transgender-issue advertiser paused for four days and relaunched with new copy, and two much smaller advertisers appeared. America PAC's Labor Day wave of eighteen creatives ended Sept 16 after ten days and roughly \$284,000 to \$344,000; on Sept 20 the same advertiser launched a turnout-framed second wave of nineteen transgender creatives across Texas, Ohio, Iowa and now Alaska, at a pace so far comparable to the first. Two other Republican advertisers ran the frame at a fraction of that scale: the Senate Leadership Fund's political action committee put "permanent sex change surgeries for children" copy on a shadow page in Ohio on Sept 18, and the National Republican Senatorial Committee's own Alaska advertisement carries a women's-sports line. What that combination means is not yet clear from the data. On the other side, two Iowa Democrats moved toward the attack's premise — one at a town hall where the room answered, one in a television advertisement that was quoted back at her within a day. Texas fell 75% and stayed first. This fifth weekly edition covers who drove each state's attacks, what is now being paid for and by whom, and where the openings are.

September 14 – 20, 2026

Data: Trans Rhetoric Social Media Dashboard | 79K+ channels | 20 platforms | 1M+ posts
13 priority states | 399 state-tagged posts | 5.9M engagements | weekly electoral briefing

Topline Finding

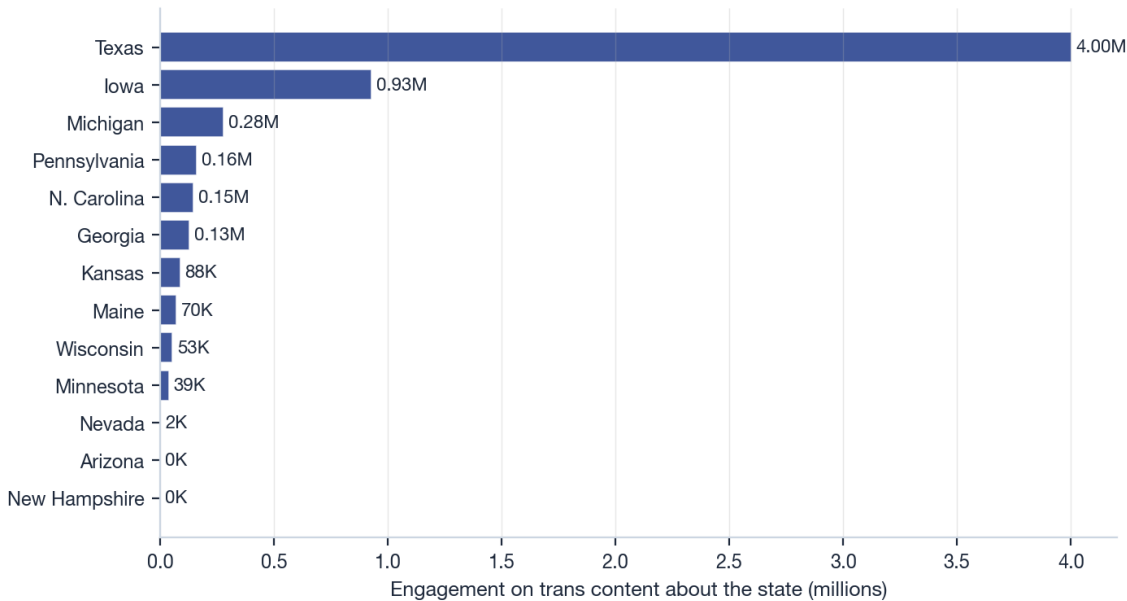
The largest paid advertiser paused for four days and relaunched; two much smaller advertisers appeared. What that means is not yet clear from the data. America PAC — the super PAC funded by Elon Musk — ended its Labor Day wave on **Sept 16**: all eighteen transgender-issue creatives closed after ten days at **\$284,000–\$344,000** and at least 4.5 million impressions, roughly \$28,000–\$34,000 a day. On **Sept 20** it launched a second wave of **nineteen** transgender creatives in Texas, Ohio, Iowa and Alaska; by the Sept 21 read the new wave had spent **\$52,000–\$61,000** in about a day, a pace at least comparable to the first wave, with the copy framed around voter registration rather than rejection. Michigan was dropped from the buy entirely.

Two other Republican advertisers ran the same frame at a fraction of the scale. On **Sept 18** the Senate Leadership Fund’s political action committee put transgender copy on a shadow page attacking the Democratic Senate nominee in **Ohio**: “The extremists demand permanent sex change surgeries for children. Sherrod Brown complies, every time” (**\$3,000–\$3,500** and 450,000–500,000 impressions in three days). The same committee runs parallel shadow pages in Michigan, Iowa and Alaska, and only the Ohio page carries this copy. Separately, the **National Republican Senatorial Committee’s** own Alaska advertisement, running since Sept 8 at **\$4,000–\$4,500**, includes the line “extreme policies that let men compete in women’s athletics.” That is the first party-committee transgender copy recorded on Meta in these briefings. Together the two buys total under \$8,000 — about a fortieth of the wave that ended and a small fraction of America PAC’s own relaunch. Whether the party-aligned advertisers are joining the attack at scale or testing it cannot be read from the libraries yet; the October pattern will show which it is.

Texas fell 75% and stayed first — 4.00M engagements across 240 posts, 68% of the map, down from 15.9M and 90%. The subject there changed from what the Democratic Senate nominee believes to whether his September positioning is sincere, after a conservative outlet published undercover footage of a minister at his congregation predicting he would revert after the election. **Iowa is second** at 929K, up 59%, and is now the most active state on this terrain: the Democratic nominee for governor told an Iowa City town hall he agrees with Republicans on transgender athletes and was called a coward from the floor, and the Democratic nominee in the Second District released a television advertisement on the same subject that was quoted back at her within a day. **Michigan is third** at 278K and is the one state where the paid attack stopped.

Five of the thirteen states — Maine, Wisconsin, Georgia, North Carolina and Pennsylvania — at least tripled from last week, and in three of the five the largest single item is not a current event; Georgia’s entire column is a recirculated summary of a law signed in April 2025. Campaigns should still treat the final week of October as the announced date for the heaviest wave of this attack, on the President’s own Sept 9 statement that he normally holds the subject until “about a week before the election.”

Where the Fight Is Concentrated — Priority States



Source: Trans Rhetoric Dashboard | issue-location layer, off-topic virality removed

Texas fell 75% and kept first place. Iowa rose on its own candidates' statements to its largest week in these briefings. Georgia, Maine, Wisconsin, North Carolina and Pennsylvania each at least tripled from last week, and in Georgia, Maine and Pennsylvania the largest item is a recirculated or retrospective story rather than a campaign event.

Where the Trans Conversation Is Landing — National Reach Map

gold outline = TFA priority state | darker = more engagement on trans content about the state



Source: Trans Rhetoric Dashboard | issue-location layer, off-topic virality removed | every priority state labeled; other states labeled above 100K

Distribution widened: Texas is 68% of the week's priority-state reach, down from 90%, and ten states cleared 30K against eight last week. This chart shows where attention went, not where the attacks are most severe. Arizona, Nevada and New Hampshire are the quietest columns; Arizona's ballot measure and Nevada's candidate-owned advertisement are paid or ballot activity that the organic data does not show.

Narratives by Race

The table below covers every race on the watch list, every week, including races where no relevant advertising is running. Advertising figures come from Meta's public ad library as of Monday morning, with Google's library checked for Georgia, Kansas and the Arizona measure; spending and impressions are shown as the ranges the libraries publish.

Two limits apply. Meta's library does not include television or streaming advertising, so "not on Meta" does not mean a campaign is not advertising elsewhere. Quoted ad language is the ads' written copy, not a transcript of their video. District rows count posts that name the candidates; state rows count all posts about the state; the two are not directly comparable.

Race	The story this week	Reach	Where it's running
Texas Senate	Sincerity, not policy — an undercover recording of a minister at the Democratic nominee's congregation predicting he will revert after the election	4.00M	Organic and paid. America PAC wave 1 ended Sept 16 (\$145K–\$170K across 4 creatives); wave 2 launched Sept 20 — 4 turnout-framed creatives, \$22.5K–\$26K, top \$8K–\$9K
Iowa Senate + 2nd + 3rd Districts	Girls' and women's sports, now aimed at four Democrats who have agreed with the premise — including a new 2nd District TV answer, and the 3rd District's "which one do you believe?" ad	929K	Paid on both. America PAC: 4 creatives vs. the Senate nominee, \$5.2K–\$7K. The 3rd District incumbent's two sports creatives each grew 5x, to \$500–\$599. No Meta creative from the 2nd or 3rd District nominee answers on the issue
Michigan Senate	Paid attack withdrawn — the "Protect Michigan's Children" creative ended and was replaced by policing and socialism copy	278K	No trans creative from any advertiser. America PAC wave 2 drops Michigan; the Senate Leadership Fund's Michigan shadow page carries no trans copy
Pennsylvania (statewide)	A federal settlement ending youth gender care at a major health system, and a documentary about one county's school-board conflicts	161K	No trans creative in the state from any advertiser

North Carolina Senate	A demand letter giving one district 15 days to allow opt-outs from a transgender teacher's class — plus a presidential rally that named the issue	147K	Organic only. The largest North Carolina buys are the state Supreme Court race; nothing touches this issue
Georgia Senate	A 2025 state sports law recirculated as if current — the whole of the state's column	128K	Public radio reports GOP trans-issue ads in the state; none on Meta (re-checked Sept 21). On Google, One Nation, the Senate Republican-aligned issue group, is at roughly \$800K in Georgia this week; the library does not show video content, so the subject cannot be read there
Kansas Senate + Governor	A vice-presidential rally line about the Democratic Senate nominee's church, and the correction that followed it	88K	No attack creative on Meta in either race (the governor's race for a third week). On television, Main Street Fund, a super PAC with undisclosed donors, has run a spot since Aug 7 placing the Senate nominee over drag-performer footage, with a drag-story-time claim fact-checkers found unsupported. On Google the Republican Governors Association's PAC leads the state at roughly \$107K; content not shown by the library
Maine (statewide)	A state university course on gender diversity in preschools, and an expanding prison class action	70K	No trans creative in the state from any advertiser
Wisconsin 3rd District	A party research account's clip of the Democratic nominee being pressed on youth medical care — the first Wisconsin candidate to appear here at any size	53K	Organic only; no trans creative in the state
Minnesota (statewide)	A 4–3 school-board vote to back a statewide change to girls'-sports eligibility rules	39K	Organic, single-outlet led; no paid trans creative in the state
Nevada (statewide)	The only candidate-owned trans-issue advertisement in any priority state — a lieutenant governor's first spot, built on girls' sports	1.9K	Candidate-owned, promoted organically; no paid trans creative found in the Meta library

Arizona 6th District + statewide ballot	One organic post labeling the Democratic nominee a “Trans Activist” (3.8K) is the only trans content in the race; the November ballot question still has no advertising in either public library	394	~50 creatives across both sides — crime, Medicaid, bipartisanship, lobbying — none trans, and none referencing the nominee’s family. “Proposition 318” returns no ads on Meta or Google for a third week; the faux-local-news page has gone to zero
Arizona 1st District	Quiet — one party-committee organic post about the Democratic nominee’s healthcare positions	1.0K	No NRCC creative on Meta. New Sept 16: a Congressional Leadership Fund tax attack (\$3.5K–\$4K); the nominee’s healthcare positive grew to \$9K–\$10K
Mississippi Senate	The incumbent’s campaign-owned imitation website, unchanged; the challenger answered with a site of his own, covered locally	8.1K	Organic (local press) only. No trans-issue ad from either campaign or the NRSC; the opaque “Saw It Online: MS” page’s two videos both roughly doubled, to \$4K–\$4.5K and \$2K–\$2.5K
New Mexico 2nd District	“Medicamentos De Castración” — the Spanish-language castration-drugs attack on Rep. Gabe Vasquez, airing on television since Aug 20	205	TV only, fifth week (AdImpact listing re-verified Sept 21). Still no Meta creative on this frame from any campaign or committee in the race
Michigan 7th and 10th Districts	No trans narrative from any side in either race; the live attacks are character copy in the 7th and tariffs in the 10th	0	~95 active creatives across all four candidates — bio, cost of living, healthcare, policing, tariffs — none trans
Pennsylvania 7th and 8th Districts	No trans narrative from any side in either race; the new attack in the 8th is a Sept 16 taxes clip of the Democratic nominee	0	~374 active creatives across both races — Project 2025, teacher pay, costs, taxes, hospitals, fundraising — none trans

Two patterns run across the table. Two of the week’s three paid advertisers, and the largest single creative of the new wave, are in Ohio and Alaska, neither a priority state here. And four of the House races listed — Michigan’s Seventh and Tenth and Pennsylvania’s Seventh and Eighth — produced no transgender-issue content at all this week, organic or paid. A quiet district is a recorded result, not a gap in the data.

Key Findings

- **The largest paid advertiser paused and relaunched, and two much smaller advertisers appeared; the data does not yet say what that means.** Until Sept 18 every paid transgender creative recorded in these briefings came from a single super PAC funded by one donor. On that date the

Senate Leadership Fund's political action committee put "The extremists demand permanent sex change surgeries for children" copy on a shadow page in the Ohio Senate race (\$3,000–\$3,500 and 450,000–500,000 impressions in three days), and the **National Republican Senatorial Committee's** own Alaska advertisement — running since Sept 8 at \$4,000–\$4,500 — carries the line "extreme policies that let men compete in women's athletics." The two buys total under \$8,000 against a relaunch already past \$52,000. Whether the party-aligned advertisers are joining the attack at scale or testing it will be visible in the October libraries; campaigns should plan for the frame to appear in their race either way.

- **The first paid wave ended on schedule and was replaced four days later by a turnout-framed one at a comparable pace.** America PAC's eighteen Labor Day creatives all closed on **Sept 16** at **\$284,000–\$344,000** for at least 4.5 million impressions over ten days. Its second wave went live **Sept 20**: nineteen transgender creatives across Texas, Ohio, Iowa and Alaska, spending **\$52,000–\$61,000** in roughly its first day; the top advertisement reached \$9,000–\$10,000 in that time, against a first-wave top of \$60,000–\$70,000 over ten days. The copy changed from rejection to voter registration — "Make your plan to VOTE and defeat him" — and Ohio gained a new line: "It starts with Drag Queen Story Hour. It ends with kids going under the knife."
- **Two Iowa Democrats moved toward the attack's premise this week, one of them for a second time, and both were quoted back within a day.** At an Iowa City town hall on **Sept 14**, the Democratic nominee for governor said of Republicans' position on transgender athletes, "I tend to agree with them on that, and I know you might be disappointed"; one attendee answered "Coward," and a local journalist's account of the exchange became the largest item in the state at 191K. In Iowa's Second District, the Democratic nominee released a television advertisement saying "we need common sense rules to keep sports fair for boys and for girls"; three national accounts quoted it back at her within a day, together carrying 337K. Seven battleground Democrats have now taken this step. In none of the seven races have the attacks stopped.
- **The charge in Texas changed from policy to sincerity.** Texas fell 75% to 4.00M and stayed first. The driver was no longer the nominee's own statements but an undercover recording, published **Sept 17**, of a minister at his Austin congregation saying "I can guarantee you that once he gets elected, he'll change his tune back to where he was." More than twenty accounts carried that clip. A policy position can be restated; a sincerity charge cannot be answered by restating it. Campaigns weighing a move on this issue should assume the move itself becomes the next subject.
- **Five states at least tripled from last week, and in three of them the largest item is not a current event.** Georgia rose from 1.2K to 128K entirely on a recirculated summary of a state sports law **signed in April 2025 and in force since July 2025**, posted without a date. Maine's 70K is led by a course listing and a prison suit filed in April. Pennsylvania's 161K is 85% one activist's retrospective post about the COVID-era school fights, timed to a documentary premiere. Recycled and retrospective content is cheap, follows no calendar, and produces the largest columns in the states with the least current activity.
- **The largest verifiable event of the week produced almost no engagement.** On **Sept 18** the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center agreed to pay the federal government \$950,000 and to stop providing gender-transition care to patients under nineteen for ten years; a second settlement the same day brought the combined total to \$9.5 million. Pennsylvania's coverage of it carried 25K — a sixth of what one personal post in the same state carried. Engagement volume is not a measure of consequence.

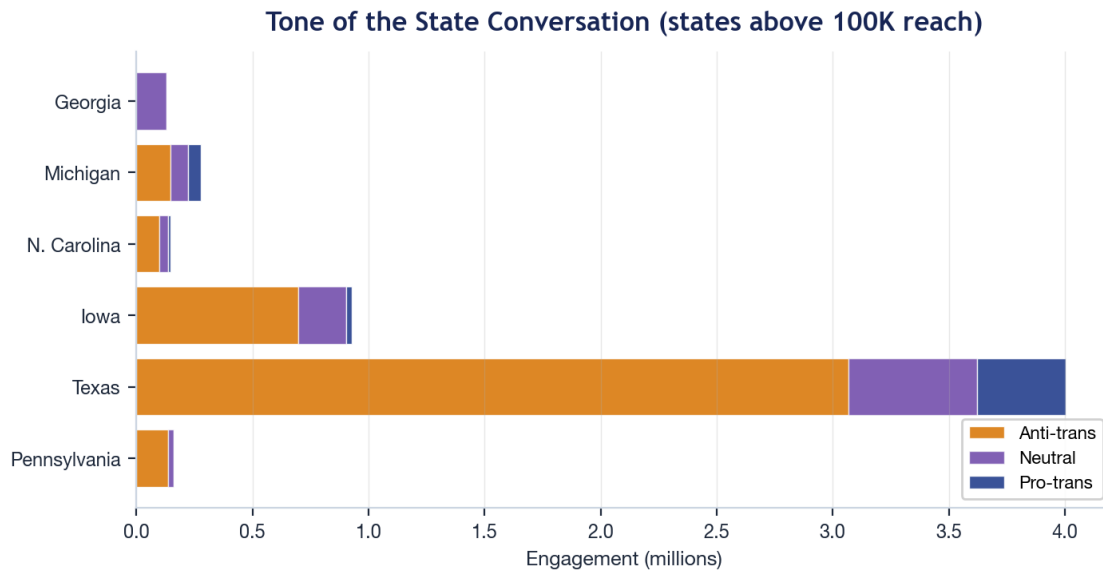
The Battleground at a Glance

A post counts toward a state if it is about that state or originates there; a national account attacking Roy Cooper counts toward North Carolina. Reach figures therefore measure attention on a state, not activity within it.

State	Primary	Posts	Reach	vs last	Anti / Pro	Top messenger
Texas	3/3/26	240	4.0M	▼ 75%	3.1M / 380K	Attorney General Ken
Iowa	6/2/26	44	929K	▲ 59%	697K / 26K	Benny Johnson
Michigan	8/4/26	20	278K	▲ 15%	148K / 56K	LARRY with Larry O'C
Pennsylvania	5/19/26	8	161K	▲ 213%	136K / 426	Meg Brock
North Carolina	3/3/26	22	147K	▲ 457%	98K / 12K	Gunther Eagleman™
Georgia	5/19/26	5	128K	▲ 111x	0 / 0	The Hodgetwins
Kansas	8/4/26	21	88K	▲ 45%	25K / 52K	Josh Helfgott
Maine	6/9/26	19	70K	▲ 38x	55K / 0	The Maine Wire
Wisconsin	8/11/26	6	53K	▲ 69x	20K / 32K	Them
Minnesota	8/11/26	15	39K	▼ 92%	38K / 760	Alpha News
Nevada	6/9/26	5	2K	▼ 98%	226 / 1K	KSNV News 3 Las Vega
Arizona	8/4/26	3	394	▼ 100%	0 / 371	Jay Kuo
N. Hampshire	9/8/26	2	30	▼ 97%	8 / 0	Beth

“vs last” compares reach with the previous weekly edition (≈ means within ±10%). Both weeks were collected and filtered the same way, so the thirteen comparisons are direct.

The Texas total counts every post about the Talarico–Paxton race, including many that never named the state. **Counted the strictest way — only posts explicitly tied to Texas — the state still ranks first, at 1.90M.** Iowa’s total includes the Second District advertisement and the Iowa City town hall, both named as Iowa events in the posts themselves.



Source: Trans Rhetoric Dashboard | stance classifier; "neutral" includes hostile-leaning news coverage

Tone is an automated, directional reading; "neutral" absorbs a large share of hostile-leaning coverage, so the anti-trans shares shown are conservative. Five states need context this week. **Georgia** reads as entirely neutral because its whole column is a flat four-sentence recitation of a 2025 statute, which the automated read treats as description rather than argument. **Kansas** and **Wisconsin** read as majority-supportive because in both states the largest item is a correction or a profile rather than an attack — a point-by-point rebuttal of a rally remark in Kansas, a cathedral appointment in Wisconsin. **Arizona** reads as 94% supportive on 394 engagements across three posts; at that volume the figure describes three accounts, not a state. **Minnesota** reads as 98% hostile on 39K, which is accurate for what was posted and says nothing about opinion in the state.

How the Attacks Travel — Originators vs. Amplifiers

Anti-trans reach is produced by two kinds of accounts. A small set **originate** stories, surfacing an incident that then spreads; a larger set **amplify**, delivering the most views to stories others started. Originators can be pre-empted; amplifiers require rapid response.

Top originators (seed stories that travel): The Five (3.5M, 3 seed stories); NowThis Politics (2.2M, 1 seed story); DW News (979K, 2 seed stories); Richard Hanania (789K, 1 seed story); Andy Ngo (698K, 7 seed stories).

Top amplifiers (most reach on others' stories): The Five (848K, 2 reposts); Allie O'Brien (278K, 1 repost); Link Lauren (249K, 1 repost); DW News (200K, 1 repost); Page Six (187K, 1 repost).

Case Studies

Case Study 1: America PAC Pauses and Relaunches; Two Smaller Advertisers Appear

What happened. Every paid transgender-issue creative recorded in these briefings before this week came from **America PAC**, the super PAC funded by Elon Musk. This week two other advertisers appeared, both small. On **Sept 16**, the **Senate Leadership Fund's** political action committee launched a shadow page attacking the Democratic Senate nominee in Ohio; on **Sept 18** it added transgender copy — “The extremists demand permanent sex change surgeries for children. Sherrod Brown complies, every time” — at **\$3,000–\$3,500** for 450,000–500,000 impressions in its first three days, with four further variants. The same committee runs parallel shadow pages against the Democratic Senate nominees in Michigan, Iowa and Alaska; only the Ohio page carries this copy. Separately, the **National Republican Senatorial Committee's** own Alaska advertisement, live since **Sept 8** at **\$4,000–\$4,500** for 250,000–300,000 impressions, includes the line “backing extreme policies that let men compete in women’s athletics.”

America PAC meanwhile completed a full cycle: eighteen Labor Day creatives ended **Sept 16** at **\$284,000–\$344,000** and at least 4.5 million impressions over ten days, and on Sept 20 **nineteen** new transgender creatives went live in Texas, Ohio, Iowa and, for the first time, Alaska, spending **\$52,000–\$61,000** in roughly their first day — a pace at least comparable to the first wave's; the top advertisement reached \$9,000–\$10,000 in that time. The framing moved from rejection to turnout, and Ohio received a new line: “It starts with Drag Queen Story Hour. It ends with kids going under the knife.”

Why it matters. The data supports a narrow statement: the largest advertiser paused and relaunched at a comparable pace, and two party-aligned advertisers ran the frame at under \$8,000 combined. Whether that is the start of a broader campaign or a small test is not yet visible. The three advertisers use the same three frames — public spending on “sex changes for kids,” sports and facilities, and a “radical” label — which means a campaign that prepares an answer for one has prepared it for all three. The shadow-page format is worth separate attention: the Ohio page is named for the candidate it attacks, carries only a small disclaimer, and did not exist five days before it was running transgender copy.

Takeaway. Campaigns in races that currently carry no transgender advertising should treat that as the current reading rather than a settled one. The practical preparation is short: the vote or statement each frame will cite, a one-sentence answer on public money, and a named person responsible for checking the ad libraries weekly. The Ohio page went from launch to transgender copy in forty-eight hours.

Case Study 2: Iowa — Seven Democrats Have Now Agreed With the Premise

What happened. Iowa produced 929K, more than any other state except Texas, and the volume came from two Democratic statements rather than from Republican advertising. At an Iowa City town hall on

Sept 14, State Auditor **Rob Sand**, the Democratic nominee for governor, was asked whether he would reconsider his position on transgender athletes in girls' sports. He answered, "I tend to agree with them on that, and I know you might be disappointed," and added that he would veto future culture-war bills. One attendee called out "Coward." A local journalist's account of the exchange carried **191K**, the largest item in the state; the room's reaction, rather than the position, is what traveled.

Four days later, in the Second District, Democratic nominee **Lindsay James** released a television advertisement titled "What I Believe," answering an outside group's spot that accused her of voting to allow "boys in girls' sports." The advertisement says: "We need to protect kids, and we need common sense rules to keep sports fair for boys and for girls. Parents know what's best for our kids. Washington needs to stay out of it." Within a day three national accounts had quoted it back at her — a congressional reporter neutrally at 151K, and two opposition accounts at 99K and 88K, one asking "She was either lying then or lying now. Which is it?"

Why it matters. Seven battleground Democrats have now stated agreement with the sports premise — in Ohio, Nevada, Iowa (four) and Texas. In none of the seven races have the attacks stopped, and in Iowa they are now built out of the agreements themselves. The Second District spot was produced as paid media, which gave the opposition a clean, high-quality clip within hours. The town-hall answer carried a different cost: an unscripted moment in a friendly room, recorded by a reporter, which became the state's largest item of the week.

Takeaway. A campaign that intends to state a position on this issue should decide in advance which of two things it is doing. A one-time statement belongs in a venue that will not generate a second news cycle and should use language the candidate can repeat unchanged through Election Day. An ongoing position needs a documented record that predates the attack, so that the statement reads as consistency rather than as news. What Iowa shows is the cost of the third option — answering the attack on the attack's own schedule, in the attack's own terms.

Case Study 3: North Carolina — The Named-Employee Format Reaches a Classroom

What happened. North Carolina rose from 26K to 147K on one school. On **Sept 15** the **Thomas More Society**, a conservative public-interest law firm, sent **Wake County Public Schools** a demand letter giving the district fifteen days to grant parents at an elementary school in Apex four things: the right to opt their children out of a required music class taught by a transgender teacher; assurance that students will not be disciplined for using different pronouns for her; advance notice of any classroom discussion of gender identity; and protection from retaliation. The firm grounds the demand in the Supreme Court's 2025 decision in *Mahmoud v. Taylor*, which requires schools to permit religious opt-outs from some instruction. The teacher is a private employee and is not named in this briefing.

The story then ran in both directions. One national account's version carried 87K, 59% of the state's week. A member of Congress representing the area posted a rebuttal; Charlotte public radio and the state Republican party both carried it; a national LGBTQ outlet and two advocacy accounts covered the demand letter itself. Separately, at a **Sept 16** rally in Gastonia for Republican Senate nominee **Michael Whatley**, President Trump listed transgender athletes among his criticisms of Democratic nominee and former Gov. **Roy Cooper**.

Why it matters. This briefing has tracked the named-private-citizen format for five weeks: a school-board member, a university staff member, a visiting scholar. The Wake County version is a legal instrument with a deadline, which gives it a second news cycle on a known date, and it is directed at an employer that must answer in public. The Senate race is attached to the subject for the first time in five weeks, and only from one side.

Takeaway. Public employers in priority states should have a protocol ready before a letter arrives, because the deadline structure sets the news schedule. For campaigns, the relevant detail is that the letter asks for opt-outs rather than a firing — a deliberately moderate-sounding request that is harder to answer than a demand for dismissal. A response that treats it as extreme will be answering a version of the letter that was not sent.

Attack Formats to Watch

- **The shadow page.** A Meta page named for the candidate it attacks, launched days before it is needed, carrying only a small disclaimer identifying its payer. The Ohio example went live Sept 16 with generic copy and added transgender copy on Sept 18. The same committee operates five of these pages across four Senate races. The format separates the attack from the committee's own brand and gives a campaign nothing obvious to search for. Campaigns should search the ad library by their own candidate's name rather than by likely advertisers, which is the only reliable way these pages surface.
- **The turnout-framed attack.** The second wave of advertisements substitutes "Make your plan to VOTE and defeat him" for "reject him." The claim is unchanged; the call to action is registration. The new wave is a day old and its pace so far matches the first; whether it runs continuously or in bursts will be visible within two weeks. The transgender copy already written for each race is likely to reappear in this wrapper through October.
- **The response converted into the charge.** Two variants ran this week. In Iowa's Third District the incumbent's war-room page continued the advertisement built on the Democratic nominee's own televised answer — "Then she made a TV ad saying she opposes it. Which one do you believe?" — and grew both creatives fivefold. In the Second District the same conversion happened organically within a day of a new advertisement airing. Any campaign planning a paid response on this issue should assume the finished spot is raw material for the next attack and write it so that the strongest available clip is one the campaign would choose.
- **The sincerity charge.** Once a candidate has moved, the attack stops arguing about the position and starts arguing about the person. Texas has the developed version — an undercover recording of a minister predicting reversion — and Iowa has the compressed one: "She was either lying then or lying now." This charge has no policy answer, which is the reason to decide the position question once, early, and on the campaign's own schedule.
- **The dated post presented as news.** Georgia's entire column is a summary of a law signed in April 2025, posted without a date and carrying 105K; Nevada's 82K last week was a June video. The format costs nothing and lands hardest where nothing current is happening. A rapid response that checks the date first will often find there is nothing to answer.
- **The named private employee, now with a legal deadline.** North Carolina's week is a demand letter giving a school district fifteen days; Maine's is a named instructor in a university course listing.

Neither person holds office. The legal version is the one to watch, because the deadline guarantees a second news cycle on a date the sender chooses. Public employers in priority states should have a protocol before a letter arrives.

- **The ballot measure that is not advertising.** Arizona, Colorado, Nebraska and Washington vote Nov 3 on school-sports eligibility by sex at birth; Arizona's measure also covers bathrooms and locker rooms. No advertisement naming Arizona's measure has appeared in the Meta or Google ad libraries for three weeks. The Yes committee, chaired by attorney Tim La Sota, released one advertisement in August, posted to its website and YouTube, built on a 2024 Massachusetts basketball clip, and has not appeared in either library since; the No side is run by a progressive advocacy group's program. Any current advertising for the measure is running where the public libraries do not index it — television, streaming, radio or mail — or has not started.

Looking Ahead — The Calendar

September 29: the North Carolina detransition appeal is argued. The state Court of Appeals hears a bid to revive a malpractice suit dismissed on timing grounds, after a 2025 state law extended the filing window for exactly these claims. North Carolina produced 147K this week on an unrelated school dispute, which means the state's conversation is already active going into the argument date rather than quiet as it was last week.

September 30: the Wake County deadline expires. The fifteen-day clock on the demand letter to Wake County Public Schools runs out. A refusal produces a lawsuit and a second news cycle; an accommodation produces a template other districts will be asked to match. Either outcome is a scheduled story in a state with a competitive Senate race, and neither Senate campaign has engaged the subject.

October 13: the Medicaid rule takes effect. Federal Medicaid and CHIP funding for transition-related care for minors ends, with a taper for patients already in treatment, and the 22-state lawsuit filed Sept 4 is trying to stop it. States may continue covering the care with their own funds — “may, not must” — which turns one federal rule into thirteen separate state questions three weeks before Election Day.

End of October: the Texas detransition clinic is due to open. Under the settlement the state attorney general secured in May, Texas Children's Hospital must open the country's first “detransition clinic” by the end of October, fund it for five years and pay the state \$10 million. An opening three days before the election is a scheduled media event and is already on the calendar.

Through October: federal hospital settlements arrive on a rolling basis. The two announced Sept 18 — \$950,000 and a ten-year moratorium at a Pennsylvania system, \$8.5 million at a New York one — follow four earlier settlements in New York, Texas, Ohio and Connecticut. Each lands as a local story on no announced schedule. Campaigns in states with large academic health systems should know whether their system is under investigation before the announcement, not after.

The last week of October: the stated target. The President said on Sept 9 that he normally likes to raise this subject “about a week before the election” and called it “one of our great sound bites of all time.” He moved early this year because he expected Democrats to shift first. Both statements are planning information: expect principal-level attacks to remain moderate through October and to return at scale, in paid media, in the final ten days.

November 3: four states vote on this directly, for the first time in American history. Arizona, Colorado, Nebraska and Washington will decide whether school-sports eligibility must follow sex at birth; Arizona's measure also reaches bathrooms and locker rooms, and Colorado and Missouri carry separate questions on medical care for minors. Arizona is the priority state on that list, no advertisement naming its measure has appeared in the Meta or Google ad libraries for three weeks, and the Yes committee's only known advertisement dates from August. It is the least visible item on this calendar.

The Bottom Line

The paid side of the week supports a narrow statement. One super PAC's Labor Day wave closed on Sept 16 after ten days and roughly \$300,000; four days later the same advertiser relaunched in four states with new copy at a pace so far comparable to the first wave. In the same week a leadership-aligned super PAC put "permanent sex change surgeries for children" copy on a shadow page in Ohio and the Senate Republicans' own committee was running a women's-sports line in Alaska, together under \$8,000. Three advertisers now use the same three frames; whether the two smaller ones are joining the attack at scale or testing it is not yet visible in the data, and the October libraries will show which it is. Campaigns in races that currently carry no transgender advertising should treat that as the current reading rather than a settled one.

Two Iowa Democrats agreed with the attack's premise this week, one of them for a second time, bringing the total to seven across four states, and in both cases the agreement was quoted back within a day — once from a friendly town hall, once from a television spot the campaign produced itself. In none of the seven races have the attacks stopped, and in Texas the charge has moved from the nominee's position to his sincerity, which has no policy answer. The decision about whether to move is therefore a judgment about persuadable voters, made once and early, rather than a way to end the attack.

Five states at least tripled from last week, and in three of them the largest item is a dated or retrospective story, while the week's most consequential event — a federal settlement ending gender-transition care for minors at a major health system — produced a sixth of what one personal post in the same state carried. The ad libraries and the court and regulatory calendars are where the next six weeks are visible, and the calendar above is the practical list.

Limitations

Geography comes from two reads: which state a post is about (roughly 10% of posts carry one) and where the account behind it is based (roughly 2% of accounts). A post can be about a state without originating there, so state reach measures attention, not local activity. Off-topic viral posts are excluded, and misread tone and state labels are corrected before anything is counted; the full record of those calls stays with the working files behind this briefing. **The Texas figure carries the biggest such judgment:** it includes posts about the Talarico–Paxton race that never named the state; counted the strictest way, Texas reads 1.90M, still first.

Tone is an automatic, directional read; "neutral" absorbs much hostile-leaning news, so anti-trans shares run conservative. This covers a fixed seven-day window (Sept 14 – 20), computed on a locked copy of the data; both weeks compared here were collected and filtered the same way, so the thirteen state

comparisons are direct. **Paid-media figures come from the Meta Ad Library**, checked September 21: the ranges are the library's own, quotes are the ads' written copy rather than video transcripts, about five of one advertiser's sixty-five active advertisements could not be read, and neither public ad library covers television or streaming. Google's library was checked for Georgia, Kansas and the Arizona measure; it lists advertisers and spending but does not display video content, so it cannot confirm or rule out transgender-issue copy in the large Georgia buys it shows. "Not on Meta" means exactly that.

The **originator/amplifier** read comes from grouping near-identical posts and from the platforms' own quote and repost links, which exist for about 36% of posts. This briefing contains **no survey, panel or message-testing content of any kind**; every recommendation derives from observed engagement data, the public ad libraries, and the public record cited here. Engagement is not persuasion.

Methodology

Data source. Trans Rhetoric Social Media Dashboard, built for TFA on the Junkipedia social listening API — 79,000+ channels across 20 platforms, 1,000,000+ posts spanning December 2023 to present, collected on 90+ keywords. **Period:** September 14 – 20, 2026 — the fifth WEEKLY edition, which runs weekly through election day at TFA's request. **Priority states** are drawn from Adrienne's "TFA priority states-races 5.18.26" sheet, plus Iowa (Jun 9 request) and Texas. **Per-state signal** counts trans-relevant posts by which state they are about and where the account is based, with a manual audit of the highest-engagement posts.

Named people, events and quotes were checked against primary or mainstream published sources; where a claim could not be sourced it is identified as unverified in the text or omitted. One claim circulating this week — a specific dollar figure attached to the Kansas school district's federal funding — could not be confirmed against the filed complaint and is not repeated here. **Paid media** comes directly from the Meta Ad Library and, for Georgia, Kansas and the Arizona measure, Google's Ads Transparency Center, both checked September 21, 2026; spending and impression figures are the ranges the library publishes, not estimates of ours. **Private individuals** who are not office-holders, candidates or public officials are not named here, even where the content attacking them does; that applies to two people in this edition, a teacher in North Carolina and an instructor in Maine. **Minor children of candidates** are never named in these briefings under any circumstances. **Legal characterizations** of the Medicaid rule follow the published rule: federal funding ends, state-only coverage is permitted, a taper for patients already in treatment is allowed — "may, not must."

Diffusion: Originators vs. Amplifiers

The originator/amplifier analysis separates the accounts that *start* a story from those that give it the most reach. Near-identical posts are grouped so the same claim or clip is tracked as it reappears across accounts, and the platforms' own quote, reply and repost links connect each amplifying post to the item it echoes. Within a story group the **originator** is the earliest poster (or, for a quote chain, the account being quoted), and **amplifiers** are ranked by the reach they add. Caveats: the platform links exist on only about 36% of posts, heavy paraphrase escapes the grouping, and "originator" means earliest *in this data set*.

Prepared by Ari Drennen for the Trans Freedom Alliance | September 2026