



**To: Interested Parties**

**Fr: The Transgender Freedom Alliance**

**Date: May 15, 2025**

**Re: Responding to political attacks on transgender people**

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From over \$200M spent in the 2024 election cycle attacking the rights of transgender people to multiple executive orders ranging from sports to education to healthcare, over 800 pieces of state legislation introduced in 2025 alone, and several cases before the Supreme Court, it is clear that the Right has latched on to issues impacting transgender people as a line of attack.

While responding to these attacks could feel like being dragged into a conversation you don't want to have, it is absolutely essential to respond. [Recent research in Wisconsin](#) shows that responding with evidence-backed messages ensures that any points lost due to an attack are regained.

This memo provides evidence-backed message recommendations for use in political debates and conversations with general audiences across age, race, and geography. Recommendations are based on extensive qualitative and quantitative research by the Transgender Freedom Alliance and its partners.

The memo includes guidance on the following topics:

- [Healthcare](#)
- [Funding for Transgender Healthcare](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Forced Outing](#)
- [Bathrooms](#)
- [Conversion Practices](#)

## OVERALL FRAMING

Voters don't want to spend time talking about or thinking through issues impacting transgender people. At the same time, they often have conflicted feelings or concerns around issues being raised by the Right's attacks and how they are framed. Only a few months ago, [voters were not clear](#) on who was politicizing issues impacting transgender people, Democrats or Republicans—57% of battleground voters thought Democrats make too big of a deal about transgender people and their issues and 51% thought Republicans make too big a deal. Today, voters say they trust Democrats more to handle transgender issues by five points (46/41), and that

advantage grows to 14 points with Independents. When asked which party is more extreme on these issues, a [solid 54% name Republicans, while only 36% say Democrats are more extreme](#). That's an 18-point spread—likely due to Trump's overreach in his first 100 days.

At the end of the day, the most effective strategy, regardless of the attack, is to focus on shared values. Not responding is not an option—it harms real people and allows us to be painted as out of touch or extreme.

No matter the attack or vehicle, **our shared values** include:

- Protecting Individual Freedom
- Protecting Parental Freedom
- Opposing Government Overreach / Interference

## HEALTHCARE

**On the issue of healthcare for transgender young people, focus on who should get to make these decisions—parents, families and doctors—and focus specifically on making sure parents have the freedom to get their child the care they need. [Seventy percent of voters](#) in battleground states agree that healthcare decisions for a transgender young person should be made by parents and doctors who know best—not politicians. And [60% of adults nationwide](#) believe families should have the ability to ensure their transgender child can receive medically necessary and age-appropriate care. Our best approach is not to litigate whether care should be available or who should be allowed to access it; rather, we should focus the conversation on who decides.**

### Recommended Messages

- **Healthcare decisions for a young person who is transgender should be made by parents and doctors, who know the situation best—not by politicians.**
- *If pressed:* Banning doctors from providing healthcare to transgender young people has serious unintended consequences. Politicians are getting in the way of doctors who have years of training and experience, are practicing according to professional standards of care, and know what is best for their patients. This is their area of expertise, not politicians'.
- *If pressed on regret:* The expert standards for care of transgender adolescents require months of screening, doctor's visits, and counseling sessions before any sort of medical care begins. Doctors and mental health professionals carefully monitor the course of care and make changes—if they're needed—to ensure the patient is always receiving the right care. It would be impossible for a young person to decide they want to transition one day and make an

irreversible decision the next.

### Additional Guidance

1. **DO keep any response focused on who decides (parents, families, and doctors, not politicians) when possible.** If you need to go beyond that first message, discuss bans as **bans on healthcare** (see #2 below).
2. **DO** focus on the roles of **parents, families, and doctors**, and how politicians shouldn't be banning parents from getting their child the care they need.
3. **DON'T** use terms (e.g., "gender-affirming care") that are unfamiliar to voters or imply that this care is different from other medical care. Instead, use everyday, relatable language like **healthcare** or **medical care**—for example, ***essential healthcare, medically necessary care.***
4. **DON'T** get baited into engaging on specific examples. Return to the point that parents or families—not politicians—should be the decision-makers on these issues.

## **FUNDING FOR TRANSGENDER HEALTHCARE**

The Right is advancing efforts to ban transgender healthcare outright, bar any institution receiving federal funding from providing it, and prohibit the use of federal funds to provide it. These efforts often leverage healthcare funding—framed as 'taxpayer dollars'—as a political wedge, exploiting emotionally charged issues and linking them to economic concerns. This approach also adds confusion to an area where public understanding is limited: healthcare for transgender people.

While a majority of Americans support comprehensive healthcare access for transgender adults; at the same time, they have complex feelings about healthcare for transgender young people. When addressing attacks on funding for healthcare for transgender people, allow people to have conflict or confusion and know that engaging and persuading is effective when using the right messages.

When talking about proposed bans on healthcare for transgender young people in federally-funded insurance programs, a three-pronged message was most effective to persuade voters to oppose it.

### Recommended Messages

- Regardless of how we feel personally about the issue, parents of transgender young people should have the right to make personal healthcare decisions with their families and their doctors just like every other parent—without government interference or fear of losing insurance coverage.
- Our country is facing major challenges. The economy is struggling, and costs are out of control. Politicians should be focused on getting things in this country back on track, not messing with Medicare and Medicaid.

- America was founded on the basic principle of freedom, and that freedom should be for everyone. Transgender people deserve the same basic protections as everyone else—to live their lives with safety, privacy, and dignity, and that includes having access to the healthcare they need.

### Additional Guidance

The Trump Administration’s attempt to ban private insurers from covering transgender healthcare—and to cut federal funding from medical institutions that provide it, including for unrelated research and programs—raises serious voter concerns about government overreach.

1. The government should not get to decide what kind of care medical professionals need to provide to patients. These decisions are best left to families and doctors, who should be able to provide safe, effective, and medically necessary care without fear of being shut down by the federal government.
2. Healthcare providers rely on federal funding to provide care to many patients—not just transgender young people. If healthcare providers lose their federal funding, they would be forced to reduce services, cut staff, and increase costs, which would hurt all patients.
3. This policy is a massive government overreach. Politicians are trying to use their funding power to coerce doctors and control what they provide to patients even when that care is paid for with private funds.

## **SPORTS**

**On efforts to ban transgender kids from participating in sports, emphasize that local schools and athletic associations should make these decisions, not politicians.** Also, consider raising legitimate concerns about enforcement—including invasive questioning or even physical exams—when pushing back against these blanket bans.

### Recommended Messages

- **Local schools and sports associations** should be handling this issue, **not politicians**.
- A blanket federal ban overriding those rules would be bad for everyone, requiring young girls to answer invasive personal questions or even undergo physical inspections by strangers if they want to play sports.
- These bans would invite anyone to call for a “gender check” on any girl who wants to play sports if they think she is “too tall” or “too strong.”
- Participating in sports teaches important values like perseverance, dedication, self-assurance, and teamwork. We should want more young people to play sports, not put

up more barriers for girls across the country that subject them to invasive interrogation or make them risk public ridicule to join a sports team.

#### Additional Guidance

1. **DO emphasize that local schools and athletic leagues should make these decisions, not politicians.**
2. **DON'T engage in a prolonged back-and-forth.** These messages are short for a reason. After you make the core points clearly, pivot to an emphasis on concerns and priorities held by most voters—e.g., lowering costs for working families.
3. **DON'T** get baited into engaging on specific examples. The point is that politicians are not the qualified decision-makers on these issues—local schools and sports associations are.

#### **FORCED OUTING**

In terms of policies that require schools and teachers to report kids to their parents for being gay or transgender (known as “forced outing”), the frame of freedom or government overreach is less effective. In these instances, **the values frame is that of parenting and our shared desire to keep kids safe.** It is also effective to show empathy for the emotional burden this places on teachers, particularly in light of the Trump Administration's executive order allowing for the prosecution of teachers who support transgender students. In fact, when asked about a proposal that would prosecute teachers who support transgender students, [a strong majority of adults \(61%\) are opposed](#), while only 27% are supportive.

It is critical to emphasize that not all kids are safe at home, and we should not force teachers to knowingly put those kids in danger. Frame messaging in the values of parenting and protecting young people, providing voters with the reassurance that we know *they* are good parents, but acknowledging that not all homes are safe.

#### Recommended Message

- Most parents know their kids would come to them if they needed help.
- And we all want kids to be safe. Unfortunately though, not all kids live in homes where healthy communication happens, and some gay or transgender teens are afraid of getting kicked out of their homes, beaten, or worse.
- We should not force teachers to knowingly put those kids in danger and violate the trust they build with their students.

## Additional Guidance

1. **DO invoke the shared value of keeping kids safe and show empathy for the emotional burden this places on teachers.**
2. **DO** pivot to broader educational issues like the need to fund our schools and ensuring all kids have the mental health support they need..
3. **DON'T** use *freedom* framing in this context. An emphasis on *keeping kids safe* is better-aligned with shared values and effective persuasion on this topic.
4. **DON'T** get baited into engaging on specific examples.

## **BATHROOMS**

When it comes to bathroom bans, it's effective to call out the motivation of the opposition and remind listeners that there are other, more pressing issues that elected officials should be focusing on, such as the economy and rising costs.

**If necessary, you can raise issues with enforcement**, including that these bans could result in harassment of non-transgender women, [which has already happened](#).

## Recommended Messages

- Politicians are trying to make an issue out of transgender people using a bathroom to score political points and scare people.
- While they're focused on who is using what bathroom, we should be focused on lowering costs and getting our economy back on track.
- IF PRESSED:  
These bans will just create more [confusion](#) and are impossible to enforce without engaging in gender checks. Already, we have seen [evidence](#) of women being asked about their gender before using the bathroom.

## Additional Guidance

1. **DO name the motivation of opponents, and then pivot quickly.**
2. If pushed, **DO** highlight the confusing and difficult nature of enforcing these bans and question enforcement realities.
3. **DON'T** engage in a prolonged back-and-forth or get baited into engaging in specific examples
4. **THINK CAREFULLY** before talking about the fact that existing laws make harassment

illegal. While this can soothe some people's concerns, it can also open the door to complicated questions. This may evoke complex reactions that can be difficult to navigate in this particular setting.

## **DANGEROUS AND DISCREDITED CONVERSION PRACTICES**

There is an uptick in dangerous, discredited practices that fringe therapists are trying to force on gay and transgender young people - what is often referred to as “conversion therapy.” The reality is, no amount of talk or pressure can make a gay person not gay, or a transgender person not transgender—and licensed therapists shouldn’t be able to abuse their position of trust to push an agenda that [research has shown](#) puts kids at high risk of suicide attempts. Messages addressing conversion practices should focus on the fact that these practices have been discredited and are dangerous as well as on the harms that these practices can cause.

### Recommended Message

- We all want kids to be healthy and safe. That’s why it’s important to protect gay and transgender young people from abusive conversion practices that try to change a part of them that can’t be changed.
- Conversion “therapy” is not actually therapy. It has no scientific basis. People are just making stuff up, calling it “therapy,” and pushing it on kids.
- These dangerous conversion practices violate the basic principles of therapy. They’re used to try and shame gay and transgender youth into hating themselves and rejecting who they are.
- Being gay or transgender is a fundamental part of who someone is. No amount of talk, pressure, or shaming tactics can make a gay person not gay, or a transgender person not transgender. But that’s exactly what these dangerous conversion practices are trying to do.

### Additional Guidance

- There is overwhelming medical consensus that conversion therapy puts young people at risk. The American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the National Association of Social Workers have debunked these practices and warned that they put the health and well-being of young gay and transgender young people in danger.
- Licensed mental health professionals who push this agenda and subject kids to these practices are acting outside the science and ethics of the mental health profession, and they’re causing lasting harm to children.

### If Pressed on Efforts to Relabel Conversion Practices As “Exploratory Therapy”

- Therapy for young people only works if the therapist is not pushing an agenda on the child. So-called “exploratory therapy” is exactly the opposite. It’s the same dangerous conversion agenda—just with a friendlier-sounding name. [Then pivot to *Recommended Messages* above]

## **ABOUT THE TRANSGENDER FREEDOM ALLIANCE**

The Transgender Freedom Alliance (TFA) is a coalition of transgender leaders—including political strategists, litigators, and public health experts—alongside messaging specialists and research firms, allowing us to build upon past research and strategic interventions. Our work is led by Adrienne Kimmell and is funded primarily by individual donors committed to advancing transgender rights and defending democracy against authoritarianism.

Our core mission is to expand public support for the transgender community by emphasizing values such as:

- Freedom from government interference in personal medical decisions.
- Parental freedom in making healthcare decisions for their children.
- Respect and dignity for every individual.

We expose anti-transgender attacks as a political distraction tactic—designed to create fear rather than address real issues—and redirect public discourse toward pressing policy concerns.

### **Proven Impact in 2024**

In 2024, TFA played a critical role in shaping political strategy, including:

- Briefing over 1,000 individuals including both the Biden and Harris campaigns and every battleground Senate, House, and gubernatorial race.
- Collaborating with national committees, state parties, and independent groups.
- Influencing debate preparation and response advertising.
- Conducting official briefings for elected representatives and congressional staff.

## **Contact**

Please contact Adrienne Kimmell ([AKimmell@sparksolutions.us](mailto:AKimmell@sparksolutions.us)) for more information or to schedule a briefing.