

TRANS FREEDOM ALLIANCE
THREAT BRIEFING

The Battleground Map

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

This was the week one five-year-old sentence became the loudest thing in American trans politics. Ninety-seven percent of the engagement Texas generated on this terrain — and Texas generated more than the other twelve priority states combined — was one attack on the Democratic Senate nominee there, built on a remark he made on the state house floor in 2021. In Kansas the Justice Department opened a new kind of front, suing a school district over the way it handles transgender students' privacy from their own parents. In Minnesota a real mass shooting was falsely attributed to a transgender woman within hours, using a hoax that has followed American shootings for a decade. Michigan, which owned this map a week ago, fell off it. And four states — Arizona among them — confirmed that in November American voters will decide school-sports eligibility rules at the ballot box for the first time. This is the third weekly edition of the electoral briefing: who drove each state's attacks, who they reached, and where the openings are.

August 31 – September 6, 2026

Data: Trans Rhetoric Social Media Dashboard | 79K+ channels | 20 platforms | 1M+ posts
13 priority states | 743 state-tagged posts | 14.1M engagements | weekly electoral briefing

Topline Finding

Texas is now the entire map. It carried 4.66M engagements across 100 posts — more than the other twelve priority states put together — and **97% of it is hostile**, the most one-sided column this tracking has recorded in any state. All of it is one attack on state Rep. James Talarico, the Democratic nominee for Texas’s open U.S. Senate seat, and its raw material is a sentence he said on the state house floor in 2021: “God is nonbinary.” Sen. Ted Cruz posted the longest version of it himself, inside an argument about tax policy, and that single post (2.32M) is the largest state-attributable item of the week in the country. **Minnesota** is second (1.35M) and 95% of its column is a post that was false when it was written: a real Sept 2 mass shooting in downtown Minneapolis was attributed within hours to a transgender woman who does not exist, using a hoax name that has followed American shootings since 2015. **Michigan**, which led this map a week ago at 7.7M, fell to 832K — partly because the televised exchange that drove it stopped travelling, partly because its Senate race has moved onto ground that is not this one, and partly because the collection pipeline now sorts a second issue vertical out of the trans slice, which makes this a cleaner measurement than last week’s. **Kansas** is fourth (337K) on the week’s only genuinely new development: the Justice Department sued a school district over how it handles transgender students’ privacy from their parents, and called the case the first of its kind. The pattern underneath all four is worth stating plainly — three of this week’s four biggest state stories were manufactured rather than reported: a quote from 2021, a podcast clip from 2022, and a shooting misattribution that was invented on the day. Only Kansas involved something that actually happened this week.

Where the Trans Conversation Is Landing — National Reach Map

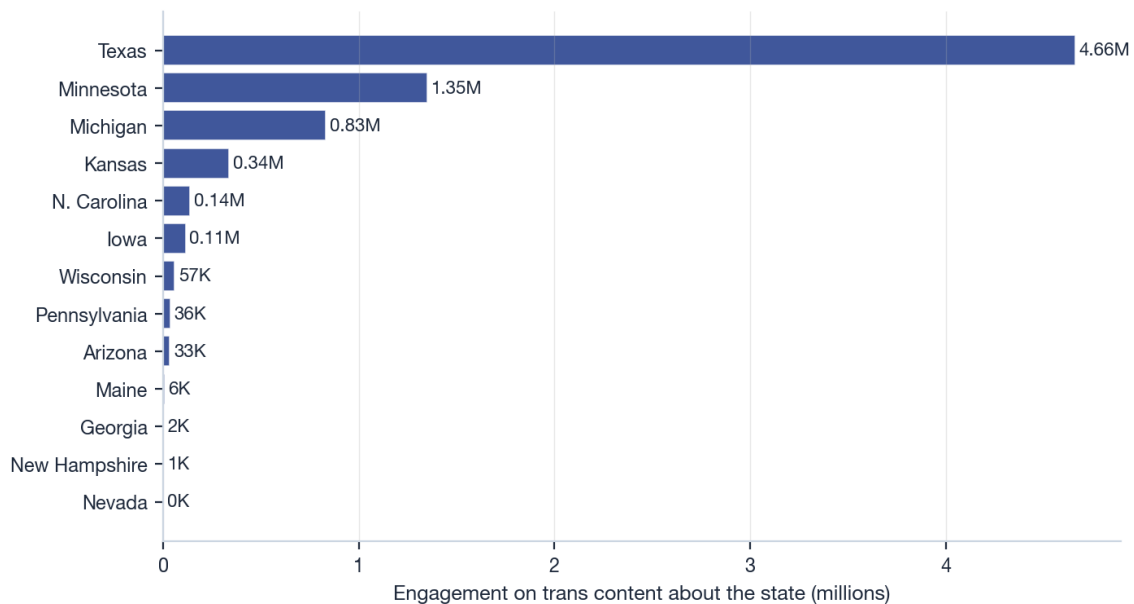
gold outline = TFA priority state | darker = more engagement on trans content about the state



Source: Trans Rhetoric Dashboard | issue-location layer, off-topic virality removed | reach labeled for states above 100K

Texas alone is 62% of the week's priority-state reach, and Texas plus Minnesota is 79%. Nine of the thirteen states are under 150K. Read the top of this chart as where attention went, not where the attacks are worst.

Where the Fight Is Concentrated — Priority States



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

Texas got there on a 2021 quote, Minnesota on a same-day falsehood, Michigan on a commentator's aside, and Kansas on a federal lawsuit. Only the fourth is an event a campaign could have seen coming, and only the fourth will still be running in November.

Narratives by Race

The same national fight shows up as a different story in every contest. Here is which narrative was doing the work where this week, and what lane it was running in. **A note on the last column this edition:** paid-media entries were verified against the Meta Ad Library in a live browser on September 8, the day before delivery. Google's library allowed only a partial view, and neither public library indexes television or streaming buys — “not on Meta” means exactly that.

Race	Narrative doing the work	This week	Where it's running
Texas Senate	Faith-framed candidate attack — “God is nonbinary,” “six genders”	4.66M	Organic, synchronized: a sitting U.S. senator, a second senator, the national party's research account, a pro-Trump super PAC — and confirmed NOT in paid rotation (checked Sept 8)
Minnesota (statewide)	Violence framing — a shooting misattributed to a trans woman	1.35M	Organic, single anonymous account; debunked within days
Michigan Senate	Secondhand — “trans the kids” as one clause in a foreign-policy attack	832K	Organic; the TV-ad creative is not in active Meta rotation (checked Sept 8) — the race's live paid is Iran attacks and fundraising
Kansas Governor / AG	Parental rights — a federal suit over school gender-support plans	337K	Organic, wire-led; state-race attack attached within days
North Carolina Senate	Medical regret — a detransition malpractice appeal, argued Sept 29	138K	Organic; litigation-driven
Iowa Governor	Girls'/women's sports — a Democrat's own answer, and the argument about it	114K	Organic; no paid on this frame in the governor's race (checked Sept 8) — the Iowa 3rd District sports ad is in its third week (see tracker)
Arizona 6th District + statewide ballot	Sports and facilities eligibility — now a November ballot question	33K	Ballot campaign; no Meta ads name the measure yet (checked Sept 8) — 6th District paid is running on crime and Medicaid, not this terrain

Georgia Senate	Quiet on this terrain for a second week	1.6K	Public radio reports GOP trans-issue ads in the state; none are on Meta (checked Sept 8) — consistent with TV/streaming buys the public libraries don't index
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Texas got faith, Kansas got parental rights, Iowa got sports — the frame follows whatever surface the local race offers. What changed this week is the source: three of the four largest state stories were not events at all but revivals — a 2021 quote, a 2022 podcast clip, and a falsehood invented on the day. Only Kansas is a thing that happened, and it is the only one still on a docket in November. The bottom three rows are the watch list, and two of them are quiet in the feed while money and litigation move underneath.

Key Findings

- **One sentence from 2021 is now 62% of this map.** State Rep. James Talarico, the Democratic nominee for Texas's open U.S. Senate seat, said on the state house floor in 2021 that "God is nonbinary" while opposing a bill on transgender youth. This week that remark, plus a claim that he believes in "six genders" and his vote against the girls'-sports bill, carried 4.66M engagements — more than the other twelve priority states combined, and 97% of it hostile. Sen. Ted Cruz wrote the longest version himself (2.32M). Nothing in the attack depends on anything Talarico does now, which is what makes it durable and what makes it answerable only in his own voice.
- **A mass shooting was blamed on a transgender woman who does not exist — within hours.** Three people died and five were wounded, two of them police officers, in a Sept 2 shooting at a downtown Minneapolis apartment building. Police identified the man who fired as Carlton Neal Johnson II, 35, who was there for a child-custody exchange. A post claiming police had "positively identified" the shooter as a 31-year-old transgender woman named "Samantha Hyde" carried 1.28M engagements — the second-largest state-attributable post of the week. The name and photograph are a recycled hoax that has followed American mass shootings since 2015; fact-checkers debunked it the same week. The correction never travels as far as the claim, which is why the response has to be fast rather than complete.
- **The Justice Department opened a new front, and it is a template.** On Sept 1 the department sued Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools over its "gender identity support plans," which allow a student to ask that a planning meeting exclude their parents, decided case by case. The department calls it the first case of its kind and argues the practice violates two federal laws giving parents access to and oversight of school records; the district says it complies with both. It carried 337K across 100 accounts — the widest messenger spread of any state — and unlike a viral quote it will still be live in November. Any district with a similar policy is now a potential defendant, and any state race can be attached to it in a day: one advocate did exactly that to the Democratic nominee for governor within seventy-two hours.
- **Michigan fell off the map it led a week ago — and part of that is a better measurement.** Michigan went from 7.7M to 832K. The televised care exchange that drove last week stopped travelling; the attacks on Democratic nominee Abdul El-Sayed have moved onto religion, foreign policy and a left-wing streamer rather than transgender policy; and the collection pipeline now sorts a second issue vertical out of the trans slice, so this edition measures the trans-issue conversation more precisely

than last week's could. Prior figures remain valid as totals for the combined slice. The real signal is that Michigan's largest item on this terrain was a national commentator's aside — "you can trans the kids" — inside a post about something else.

- **For the first time, American voters will decide this at the ballot box — and Arizona is one of the four.** Arizona, Colorado, Nebraska and Washington will each put school-sports eligibility based on sex at birth directly to voters on Nov 3; Arizona's measure also covers school bathrooms and locker rooms, and Colorado and Missouri carry separate measures on medical care for transgender minors. This has never happened before. Every one of these is a campaign with a budget, a deadline and a message-testing program, and unlike a viral post it cannot be waited out.
- **The enforcement lane is now busier than the legislative one.** Within this single week: the Kansas school-district suit; a Sept 4 agreement in which Mount Sinai Health System in New York ended pediatric gender-transition care and committed \$2 million to care for people who say they were harmed by it — the fourth such hospital agreement; and a 22-state lawsuit, joined by Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel, against the federal rule ending Medicaid and CHIP coverage of transition-related care for minors, which takes effect Oct 13. None of these is a bill and none of them can be filibustered.
- **The week's single largest national item was a casting story, not a policy story.** Elliot Page told a film podcast that he has been offered no roles since appearing in Christopher Nolan's "The Odyssey," and said being transgender is probably why. The story ran past 12M across the aggregators, entertainment press and conservative media in three days. It carries no state tag and appears in none of the figures in this briefing, but it is what most people who encountered a transgender subject this week actually saw — and both sides read it as proof of their case.
- **Wisconsin's entire column is a violent crime, and Georgia's is empty for a second week.** Ninety-four percent of Wisconsin's 57K is one report that two men were charged Sept 1 with attempted sexual assault and strangulation of a transgender woman on a University of Wisconsin–Madison pier. Georgia produced 1.6K in total — while, per Atlanta public radio's own reporting this week, Republican campaigns in the state are running transgender-issue ads against Democrats. A state can be loud in the ad break and silent in the feed; this briefing measures the second, and Georgia is the standing reminder of the difference.

The Battleground at a Glance

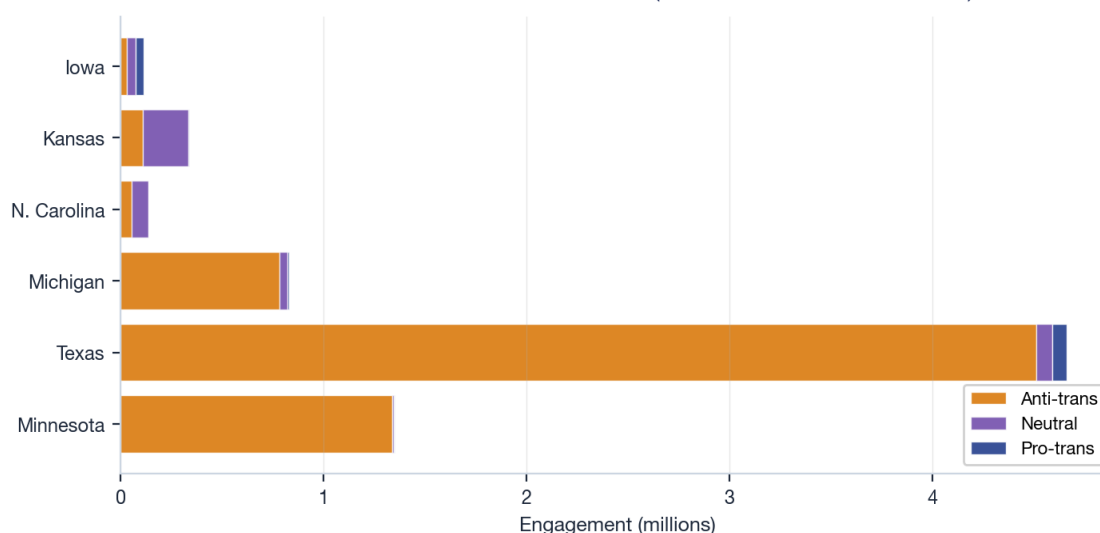
Two layers drive this briefing. The **issue-location** layer tags which state each post is about; the **account-location** layer tags where the messenger is based. A post can be about a state without originating there (a national account attacking Roy Cooper counts toward North Carolina), so the reach figures below measure attention on a state, not local activity alone. Off-topic virality that keyword-matched a state (foreign-language tabloid items, unrelated news) has been removed by hand.

State	Primary	Posts	Reach	vs last	Anti / Pro	Top messenger
Texas	TBD	209	6.1M	▲ 137%	4.7M / 685K	Ted Cruz
Michigan	8/4/26	200	4.4M	▼ 43%	1.4M / 2.4M	Mo News
Minnesota	8/11/26	46	1.9M	▼ 40%	1.4M / 89K	Clayton Walker

Pennsylvania	5/19/26	46	402K	▲ 11%	325K / 2K	Libs of TikTok
North Carolina	3/3/26	22	391K	▲ 11%	76K / 12K	Gunther Eagleman™
Kansas	TBD	124	353K	▲ 58%	113K / 13K	Polymarket
Iowa	TBD	31	246K	▼ 63%	31K / 41K	Politics & Poll Trac
Wisconsin	8/11/26	24	123K	▲ 18%	597 / 113K	Polymarket
Georgia	5/19/26	27	104K	▲ 14x	3 / 2K	Mario Nawfal
N. Hampshire	9/8/26	23	80K	▼ 21%	168 / 52K	Wesley Yang
Arizona	8/4/26	11	72K	▲ 156x	35K / 31K	Josh Helfgott
Maine	6/9/26	21	20K	▲ 236%	6K / 13K	Aaron Parnas
Nevada	6/9/26	2	213	▼ 88%	0 / 213	The Big Picture

“vs last” compares reach with the previous weekly edition (≈ means within ±10%). A rising state deserves attention before its number is large.

Tone of the State Conversation (states above 100K reach)



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

Tone is a directional read from the stance classifier; “neutral” absorbs a large amount of hostile-leaning coverage, so anti-trans shares are conservative. Three columns need reading against the grain this week. **Kansas** looks far less hostile than the story is, because two-thirds of its reach is wire coverage of a federal lawsuit and wire copy codes neutral — that is a measure of how broadly the story travelled, not of sympathy. **Wisconsin** and **Arizona** read almost entirely supportive, but each is one report of harm to transgender people rather than any counter-argument: attention to an attack is not counter-speech. **Iowa** is the only state where supportive outweighs hostile, and the reason is that its loudest voices are Democrats arguing with each other about their own nominee. Forty-four stance codes were hand-corrected this window where the classifier had inverted or under-read campaign content — a senator’s own attack post coded neutral, a party account’s attack video coded supportive, an LGBTQ outlet’s report of an assault coded hostile — and each correction is documented in our review notes. Read this chart alongside the state notes, not instead of them.

How the Attacks Travel — Originators vs. Amplifiers

Two different jobs create anti-trans reach. A small set of accounts **originate** stories — surfacing a local incident that then spreads; a larger set **amplify**, putting the most eyeballs on stories someone else started. The two call for different campaign responses: pre-empt originators, rapid-respond to amplifiers.

Top originators (seed stories that travel): Benny Johnson (1.5M, 6 seed stories); Fox News (1.4M, 7 seed stories); @Emegotheirst (662K, 1 seed story); Libs of TikTok (649K, 4 seed stories); Matt Walsh (575K, 1 seed story).

Top amplifiers (most reach on others' stories): Whatever (podcast) (349K, 2 reposts); Mel Gibson (338K, 1 repost); First N Second (292K, 1 repost); TMZ (223K, 1 repost); Enes Kanter Freedom (215K, 1 repost).

Who These Attacks Reach

The dashboard has no engager-level data, so audience is **modeled** — inferred from the demographics of the accounts that produce and amplify content, weighted by engagement, under a homophily assumption. It blends US Census surname data, Social Security first-name records, each platform's known user base, and where accounts are based. For the roughly 83% of anti-trans reach carried by accounts with a real name or seed match this period, this is a genuine read; the rest falls back to a national baseline. Treat it as directional, not measured — but the split between the two sides is stark enough to act on.

Basis notes. Twenty-one high-reach posts whose subject was unmistakably one state — the Texas Senate attacks, the Michigan parade footage, the Kansas lawsuit, the Minneapolis shooting post, the Wisconsin assault report and a North Carolina school-board video — carried no state tag at all and were hand-assigned under the same rule used in previous editions. Four posts carrying state tags they had not earned were unassigned or narrowed, including a 200,000-engagement post about the Nebraska Senate race that had been tagged to North Carolina and Ohio, and a nightly news rundown tagged to Georgia. Two comparability notes for the “vs last” column. First, the collection pipeline now sorts a second issue vertical out of the transgender slice; applied to last week’s window it moves a large share of Michigan’s classifier-tagged volume out of these figures, so Michigan’s fall is partly a sharper measurement and not only a change in the world. Prior editions’ figures remain valid as totals for the combined slice, and editions from this one forward are directly comparable to each other. Second, the collection expansion made on Aug 31 is now present in both weeks being compared, so every arrow except Michigan’s is a like-for-like weekly comparison for the first time. All figures were computed on a window-exact frozen snapshot of the dashboard.

Audience of...	Gender	Top age cohorts	Race (modeled)	Evidence	Conf.
Anti-trans attacks	80% male / 20% female	Boomer 30% · Gen X 30% · Millennial 28%	White 47% · Hispanic 40% · Asian 5%	61%	0.71

Pro-trans content	77% male / 23% female	Millennial 36% · Gen Z 33% · Gen X 22%	White 84% · Hispanic 6% · Black 5%	86%	0.66
All state content	79% male / 21% female	Gen X 29% · Millennial 29% · Boomer 28%	White 51% · Hispanic 36% · Black 5%	60%	0.68

The modeled audience shifted sharply this week, and the reason is that one state now dominates the corpus. Anti-trans state content reached an audience modeled at **80% male**, spread evenly across boomers, Gen X and millennials, and **40% Hispanic** — the highest Hispanic share this tracking has produced, and a direct consequence of Texas being 62% of the week’s reach. Treat that racial figure with the most caution of anything in this document: it is inferred from the surnames and locations of the accounts producing and amplifying content, it is the weakest layer of the model in any week, and this week it is essentially a statement about Texas. The supportive row is weaker still in a different way: modeled supportive reach fell to roughly **0.2M**, because almost nothing supportive travelled anywhere this week. Its evidence share is high (86%) precisely because it is small. The anti-trans row rests on 61% evidence and 0.71 mean confidence — firmer on confidence than last week, thinner on coverage.

Case Studies

Case Study 1: Texas — A 2021 Sentence Becomes 62% of the Map

What happened. In 2021, arguing on the Texas House floor against a bill restricting transgender young people, state Rep. **James Talarico** said that God is nonbinary. He is now the Democratic nominee for Texas’s open U.S. Senate seat, against Attorney General **Ken Paxton**. This week that sentence — paired with a claim that he believes in “six genders” and with his vote against the girls’-sports bill — carried 4.66M engagements, more than every other priority state combined. **Sen. Ted Cruz** wrote the fullest version himself, folded into a reply about tax policy, and it became the largest state-attributable post of the week anywhere in the country (2.32M). On Sept 2 a CNN panel gave it a second engine: a Republican commentator broke off a debate about campaign money to ask “Is God nonbinary?”, a co-panelist said “Who cares?”, and the twenty seconds were clipped to 681K by one account and 487K by another. **Sen. Tim Scott** of South Carolina ran the line twice (297K), the national party’s research account surfaced a 2022 podcast in which Talarico praised a transgender advocate at the state capitol (232K), and a pro-Trump super PAC compressed all of it into a list card (162K). The largest supportive item in the state was a state-house candidate noting that no transgender athlete has ever competed in Texas college sports — 8K.

Why it matters. Nothing in this attack is news, and that is the point. It has no event attached, so there is no cycle to wait out; it rests on a five-year-old quote, so nothing the campaign does now changes the source material; it is carried by principals — two sitting senators and the party itself — rather than by consultants, which guarantees coverage; and it is aimed at a candidate who has been leading. The CNN moment shows the mechanism: the line is now short enough to be deployed as an interruption in an

unrelated argument, which means any televised appearance is a delivery vehicle whether or not the topic comes up.

Takeaway. A quote this old cannot be outrun, only overwritten — and only in the candidate’s own voice. The test for the replacement sentence is whether an opponent has to quote it in full to use it; anything shorter gets clipped. Note also what the supportive column shows: the one factual rebuttal available here — that Texas has never had a transgender college athlete — exists, is checkable, and reached 8,000 people against 4.5 million. That gap is a distribution problem, not a message problem.

Case Study 2: Minnesota — The Hoax That Arrives Before the Facts

What happened. On Sept 2 a gunman opened fire at a downtown Minneapolis apartment building. Three people died, including the shooter; five more were wounded, two of them Minneapolis police officers. Police identified the man who fired as **Carlton Neal Johnson II, 35**, who was at the building for a child-custody exchange and who was facing eviction over earlier threats with a gun. Within hours, an account posted that police had “positively identified the corpse of the suspected shooter as 31 year old Samantha Hyde,” adding that “social media posts indicate Samantha was a trans woman who previously went by the name Samuel.” It carried 1.28M engagements — 95% of Minnesota’s week and the second-largest state-attributable post in the country. The name is a decade-old internet hoax, a variant of a running joke that has been attached to American mass shootings since 2015; the accompanying photograph was digitally altered. Fact-checkers published debunks the same week.

Why it matters. This is a different format from the anniversary post that put Minnesota at the top of this map two weeks ago, and a harder one. An anniversary can be diarized. This cannot: it attaches to a violent event that has not happened yet, it arrives in the first news vacuum before any identification is released, and it is designed to be forwarded by people who believe it. It also does specific electoral damage in a state with an open Senate seat, because it converts an ordinary crime into evidence about a population.

Takeaway. Speed beats completeness. The useful response in the first hours is not a defense of transgender people but a single checkable sentence about the record — police have named the suspect, and here is the name — posted while the claim is still spreading. Campaigns and state parties in states with open seats should decide now who is authorized to post that sentence and how fast, because by the time a communications chain has approved a paragraph the post has done its work. It is also worth knowing that this particular hoax has a name and a ten-year history: recognising it on sight is most of the response.

Case Study 3: Kansas — The Lawsuit as Campaign Infrastructure

What happened. On Sept 1 the Justice Department sued **Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools**, in what it called a first-of-its-kind case. The district’s “gender identity support plans” let a transgender student or their parents meet staff to set out a preferred name and pronouns; a student may ask that parents be

excluded from that meeting, and the district weighs each such request case by case against the student's age and welfare. The department argues this violates two federal laws that give parents access to and oversight of records schools keep about their children. The district says it is in full compliance with both and is disappointed by the filing. The story carried 337K across 100 separate accounts — by far the widest messenger spread of any state this week — and roughly two-thirds of that reach is wire coverage from Reuters, NBC News and The Hill rather than advocacy. Within seventy-two hours a school-choice advocate had attached it to the state race, running three posts about state Sen. **Cindy Holscher**, the Democratic nominee for governor, and her 2023 vote against overriding a veto of the girls'-sports bill.

Why it matters. Every other large story in this briefing is a revival or a fabrication with a life span measured in days. This one has a docket number. It will still be generating coverage in November, it makes every district with a comparable policy a potential defendant, and it converts a school-board-level argument into a federal one that local officials cannot settle locally. The wire-heavy coverage mix is itself significant: this reached general-news audiences, not just partisan ones.

Takeaway. Answer the policy, not the framing. The district's actual practice — a case-by-case judgment weighing a student's age and safety, not a blanket rule of secrecy — is a defensible sentence that almost no coverage carried, and school boards in priority states should have their own version of it written down before they are asked. Campaigns should also expect the attachment: within three days a federal filing in one district became an attack on a gubernatorial nominee for a vote she cast in 2023.

Attack Formats to Watch

- **The instant misattribution.** In the first hours after a violent event, before any official identification, a post names the attacker as transgender. This week's version used "Samantha Hyde," a hoax name attached to American mass shootings since 2015, and reached 1.28M. It costs nothing, it arrives when nothing can yet contradict it, and the correction reaches a fraction of the original audience. The counter is a prepared one-sentence pointer to the police record, posted fast, by someone already authorized to post it.
- **The quote with no expiry date.** A single sentence from years earlier, short enough to deploy as an interruption. Texas shows the mature form: a 2021 floor remark carried 4.66M this week and was used on cable television to derail an argument about campaign finance. Because it has no news hook, there is no cycle to outlast — the only counter is a replacement sentence in the candidate's own voice that cannot be usefully clipped.
- **The unearthed clip.** Opposition research delivered as discovery: a 2022 podcast in which the Texas nominee praised a transgender advocate at the state capitol was posted as "UNEARTHED" and carried 232K across two posts. The format needs no wrongdoing, only warmth toward a person the audience is expected to reject. Assume every recorded appearance a candidate has ever made is in the pile.
- **The federal enforcement action as campaign material.** A lawsuit, a settlement or a funding rule does the work a candidate would otherwise have to do. Three landed in seven days — the Kansas school-district suit, the Mount Sinai hospital agreement, and the Medicaid coverage rule now facing a 22-state challenge. Each carries a docket, a deadline and press releases from an agency with a communications budget, and none of them expires when the news cycle does.

- **The named private citizen.** The smallest and least reported format, and the one most likely to hurt someone: an out-of-state group posted video of a named parent speaking at a rural Maine school-board meeting, called her a “transgender cultist,” and published her work email address. It drew 3,000 engagements. The Wake County story in North Carolina, now in its second month and its second Senate campaign, started at roughly this size.
- **The anniversary — due again in four days.** The format that put Minnesota at the top of this map two weeks ago recurs on Sept 10, the first anniversary of the killing of Charlie Kirk. A clip of him pressing a student on “what is a woman” was already recirculating on Sept 6 and carried 937K. Anniversaries are the only attack format that can be diarized in advance, which makes an unprepared response to one inexcusable.
- **The ballot measure as a permanent campaign.** New this week and structurally different from everything above: Arizona, Colorado, Nebraska and Washington will put school-sports eligibility to voters on Nov 3, with Arizona’s also covering bathrooms and locker rooms, and Colorado and Missouri voting separately on medical care for transgender minors. A ballot campaign has staff, money, a message-testing programme and a fixed date. It cannot be waited out and it will not stop when the news moves.

Looking Ahead — The Calendar

September 8 — tomorrow: New Hampshire votes. The state primary is the next election on this calendar. The federal appeals court ruling for the parents who wore pink “XX” wristbands at a girls’ soccer game has almost entirely stopped circulating in New Hampshire (the state produced 1.4K of engagement on this terrain all week), but the symbol outlasts the coverage and the district court still has to decide a remedy, which will generate a second cycle.

September 10: the Charlie Kirk anniversary. The first anniversary of the killing falls four days after the close of this window, and the recirculation has already begun — a clip of him pressing a student to define “woman” carried 937K on Sept 6. Expect a volume spike on this terrain built around confrontation footage rather than policy, and expect it in every priority state at once.

September 21: Pennsylvania’s comment window closes. Public comment ends on the state health-code rewrite that replaced “pregnant woman” with “pregnant or postpartum individual” in syphilis-testing provisions. The story has stopped travelling; the deadline has not moved. It remains a fixed date on which the administration can put a plain-language explanation on the record.

September 29: the North Carolina detransition appeal is argued. The state Court of Appeals hears Prisha Mosley’s bid to revive a malpractice suit dismissed on timing grounds, after a 2025 state law extended the filing window for exactly these claims. It was already North Carolina’s largest item this week at 80K, and an argument date guarantees a second, larger one.

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 a 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.

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 a priority state, and its ballot campaign is the single most predictable source of paid anti-trans messaging between now and the election.

Strategic Recommendations

COUNTER	PIVOT AWAY	LEAN INTO
• Pre-write the shooting sentence, and name who posts it (Minnesota). The misattribution reached 1.28M before any correction existed. The response that works is one checkable line — police have identified the suspect, and here is the name — posted inside the first hours by someone already cleared to post it. • Overwrite the old quote in the candidate's own voice (Texas). A 2021 sentence cannot be outrun. Write the replacement so that an opponent has to quote it in full to use it, put it on the record before the next televised appearance, and expect the question as an interruption to an unrelated topic. • Give school boards the sentence before they need it (Kansas). The district's actual practice — a case-by-case judgment weighing a student's age and safety, not a blanket rule of secrecy — is defensible and almost no coverage carried it. Any district with a similar policy should have its own version written down now.	• Arguing about the shooter's identity. It concedes the frame and cannot be won on a feed. The checkable claim is who police actually named, and it is available in one click. • Letting a factual rebuttal sit unfunded. Texas's one clean counter-fact — that no transgender athlete has ever competed in Texas college sports — reached 8,000 people against 4.5 million. That is a distribution failure, not a message failure. • Reading a quiet state as a safe one. Georgia produced 1.6K on this terrain while, per Atlanta public radio's own reporting this week, Republican campaigns there are running transgender-issue ads. Feed silence is not race silence.	• Fixed dates as offense: Sept 10 (the Kirk anniversary), Sept 21 (Pennsylvania's comment deadline), Sept 29 (the North Carolina appeal) and Oct 13 (the Medicaid rule). All four are diarizable now, and the "may, not must" receipt on state Medicaid coverage belongs in every priority-state campaign's hands before Oct 13. • Arizona needs a ballot plan, not a rapid-response plan. It is one of four states voting directly on this in November and the only one on this list. A ballot campaign has a budget and a deadline; treat it as an opponent with a field programme, not as a news cycle. • Watch the small named-citizen posts. A 3,000-engagement attack on a named parent at a Maine school board is the same format that became a two-month, two-campaign story in Wake County, North Carolina. Intervening while it is small is the only cheap moment.

The bottom line. Three of this week's four biggest state stories were not events. A sentence from 2021 became 62% of this map; a podcast clip from 2022 was posted as a discovery; a shooting was attributed to a person who does not exist, using a hoax name a decade old. Only Kansas involved something that actually happened, and it is the only one of the four that will still be running in November — which is the argument for spending your preparation there rather than on the loud ones. The manufactured stories are answered with speed and with sentences written in advance: who posts the police record in the first hour, and what the candidate's own durable line is. The real ones are answered with a calendar: Sept 10, Sept 21, Sept 29, Oct 13, and a ballot campaign in Arizona that runs until Nov 3.

Limitations

Geography is measured from two dashboard layers: **issue-location** (which state a post is about; ~10% of posts carry a state tag) and **account-location** (where a channel is based; ~2% of channels). A post can be about a state without originating there, so state reach measures attention, not local activity. Off-topic virality that keyword-matched a state was removed by hand — thirty-seven posts this window — and forty-four stance codes and twenty-five geolocation tags were hand-corrected, all documented in our

review notes. Stance is a directional classifier read; “neutral” absorbs much hostile-leaning news, so anti-trans shares are conservative. This is a seven-day window (Aug 31 – Sept 6), computed on a frozen, integrity-verified weekly snapshot of the dashboard. The Aug 31 collection expansion is present in both weeks compared here, so the arrows are like-for-like for the first time — with one exception: the pipeline now sorts a second issue vertical out of the transgender slice, which affects Michigan materially and is stated in the state note and the basis note. Prior editions’ figures remain valid as totals for the combined slice, and editions from this one forward are directly comparable.

The **audience** read is modeled, not observed: the dashboard has no engager-level data, so audience is inferred from the demographics of the accounts producing and amplifying content, engagement-weighted, under a homophily assumption (producer ≠ audience is the foundational caveat). It blends Census surname data, SSA first-name records, platform user base, and account location; the “evidence” column reports the share of reach with a real name/seed match versus a national fallback. The racial estimate is the weakest layer and is hedged hardest — this week especially, because a single state is 62% of the corpus. The **originator/amplifier** read is modeled from near-duplicate text clustering plus native amplifier edges captured for ~36% of posts. This briefing contains **no survey, panel or message-testing content of any kind**; every recommendation in it derives from observed engagement data and from the public record cited in it. 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 (topic, framing, and named-figure terms). **Period:** August 31 – September 6, 2026 — the third WEEKLY edition of the electoral briefing, which runs weekly through election day at TFA’s request (the narrative briefing remains on its own longer cycle). **Priority states** are drawn from Adrienne’s “TFA priority states-races 5.18.26” sheet, plus Iowa (Jun 9 request) and Texas/Talarico. **Per-state signal** uses two geolocation layers — issue-location (which state a post concerns) and account-location (where a channel is based) — filtered to trans-relevant posts carrying engagement, with a manual audit of the high-engagement tail to remove off-topic keyword matches. **Named people, events and quotes** in this briefing were checked against primary or mainstream published sources before publication; where a claim could not be sourced, it is either identified as an unverified claim in the text or omitted.

Diffusion: Originators vs. Amplifiers

The originator/amplifier analysis separates the accounts that *start* a story from those that give it the most reach. It runs in two passes. First, **near-duplicate clustering**: every post's text is normalized (URLs, @-handles, casing, and punctuation stripped) and grouped with near-identical posts, so the same claim or clip is tracked as it reappears across accounts — a window's posts collapse into a few thousand recurring-story clusters covering roughly 40% of volume. Second, **native amplifier edges**: the platform-level quote, reply, and repost relationships (present on about 36% of posts) link each amplifying post to the item it echoes.

Within a cluster, the **originator** is the earliest poster (or, for a retweet/quote chain, the account being quoted); **downstream reach** is the total engagement the story accrues beyond the originator's own post; **amplifiers** are the other accounts in the cluster, ranked by the reach they add to stories they did not start. Originators are ranked both by the number of distinct stories they seed and by the downstream reach those seeds generate. Caveats: native edges exist on ~36% of posts; clustering misses heavy paraphrase; “originator” means earliest *in the dataset*.

Audience Model

Audience is **modeled**, not measured; mechanics and caveats are stated in full in the audience section above. **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.”

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