

To the Committee:

I am writing today to **support** HB2002.

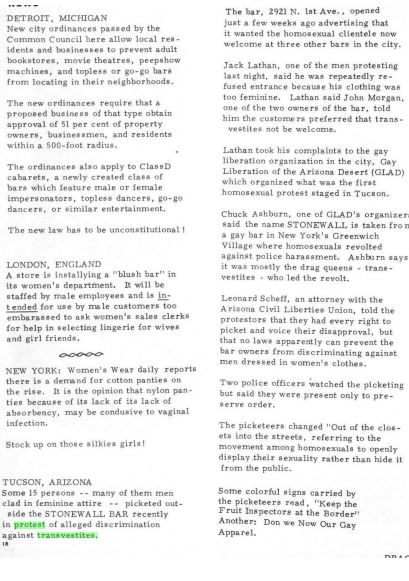
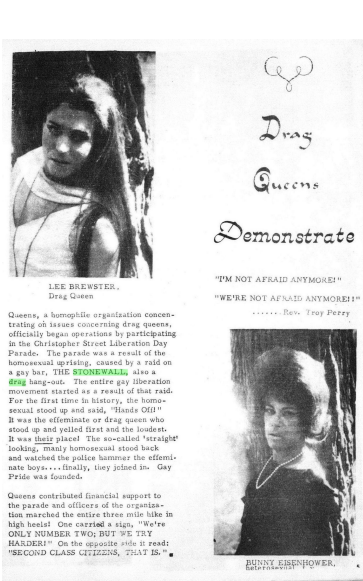
Opposition to this bill seems to fall into a few arguments, all of which are based on cherry-picking and inherent bias. Like opposition to marriage equality and racial justice most of the opposition is built from the ground up around the premise that LGBTQ people are inherently flawed and defiled by sin.

Here are some of the myths used to turn people against their trans neighbors:

MYTH 1: "trans people didn't exist before very recently"/"trans people weren't a part of the gay community until recently":

One of the central arguments of opponents of trans rights has is the idea that people were not transgender and that the identity did not exist prior to a certain, typically very recent date. A tweet popular among the "gender critical" (anti-trans) ideology suggested that in the person's 40 years of life they only recently began to see references to trans people. This is blatantly wrong and easily debunked.

The truth of the matter is that trans people have been organizing since before Stonewall and that their impact at Stonewall itself was notable. Prior to Stonewall, trans women famously protested at Compton's Cafeteria in 1966, for example. At Stonewall, even the famously oft-cited Stormé DeLarverie was a gender-bending drag performer and in the years that followed began using "he/him" pronouns.



Left and right: DRAG MAGAZINE, 1972. Center: Gay Community News, 1971.

Even more insidious is the idea that transgender people are necessarily excluded from the larger gay community. While the history is abundantly clear that the ideas of gender difference and sexual orientation were treated as the same thing for so long, much of that time during which states like Oregon were putting queer people in psychiatric hospitals merely for being gay.

Even more conclusively, we see trans people of all stripes being celebrated as part of gay liberation, ultimately leading the landmark 1974 March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights incorporated

“trans people” as part of the LGBTQ community.

MARCH ON WASHINGTON

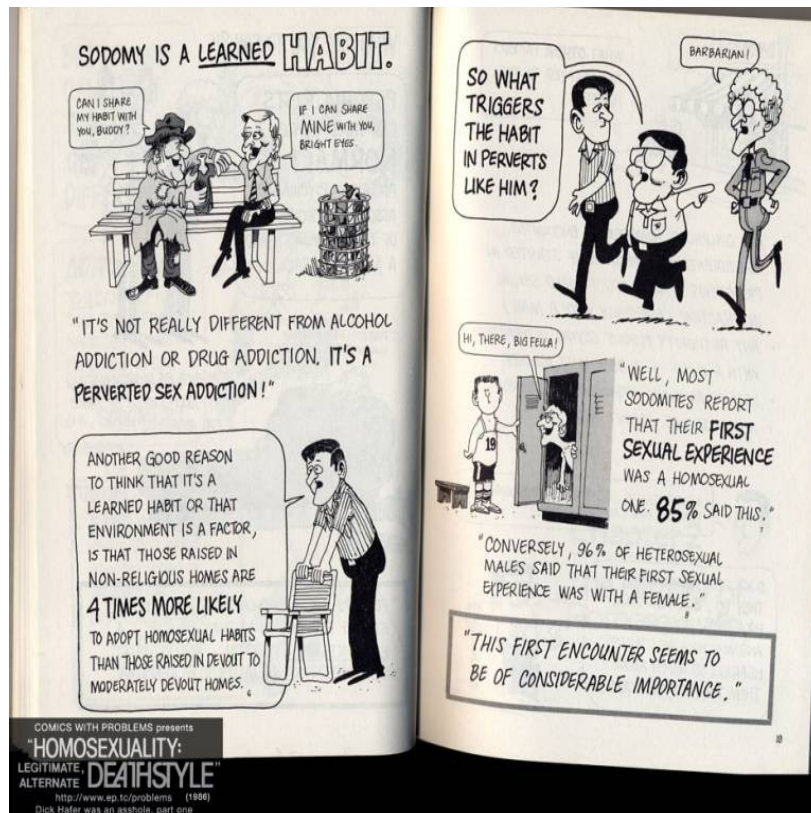
The weekend of July 6-8, a conference was held in Houston, Texas to make plans for the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights on October 14, 1979. Virginia had seven representatives there, including Dee Dee and Karen Gibbs from Richmond. Most of the decisions were about policy for the March. Some of the more important decisions included:

1. to have a "Gay Constituancy Day" the Monday after the March, so people can lobby their Washington representatives,
2. to state that the March will be non-violent,
3. to include "trans-people"(transsexuals, transgenderists, transvestites, drags, and female impersonators) in future publications in lists of subgroups within the Lesbian and Gay Community,
4. to accept the statement of Policy and the five demands decided on by an earlier meeting in Philadelphia in February,
5. to accept in full the womyn's caucus report which, was designed to encourage all lesbian, particularly, "Third world" Lesbians (including Afro-Americans, Latin Americans and Native Americans), to participate in the March and in the March planning.

Above: via 1979 radical feminist newsletter

MYTH 2: Social contagion and “Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria” are the reason for a larger visible trans population

It's been an article of faith among the transphobic that trans identity exists as a kind of disease, mental and physical. The contagion theory of queerness is insidious and informs other myths and suggests that it's the transmission of “gender ideology” or physical violation that create trans people. If this sounds familiar, it is: it's the dominant homophobic argument for the past 40 years.



From "Homosexuality: Legitimate, Alternative Deathstyle" by Dick Hafer

ROGD and social contagion are cited frequently due to deliberately misrepresented studies but are, in fact, not a factor. In a September 2022 issue of Pediatrics, the idea that young girls, specifically, were being targeted, was debunked and the idea that social contagion was a factor was shoved aside.

"The hypothesis that transgender and gender diverse youth assigned female at birth identify as transgender due to social contagion does not hold up to scrutiny and should not be used to argue against the provision of gender-affirming medical care for adolescents," said study senior author Dr. Alex S. Keuroghlian, who directs the National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center at The Fenway Institute and the Massachusetts General Hospital Psychiatry Gender Identity Program.

Researchers used data from the 2017 and 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey to explore the hypothesis known as "rapid-onset gender dysphoria" (ROGD), which posits that young people begin to identify as TGD for the first time as adolescents rather than as prepubertal children and that this identification and subsequent gender dysphoria are the result of social contagion. The ROGD hypothesis further asserts that youth assigned female sex at birth are more susceptible to social contagion than those assigned male sex at birth.

From: <https://fenwayhealth.org/new-study-examines-the-social-contagion-hypothesis-of-transgender-and-gender-diverse-identities/>

Myth 3: Allowing trans people in public is a threat to women

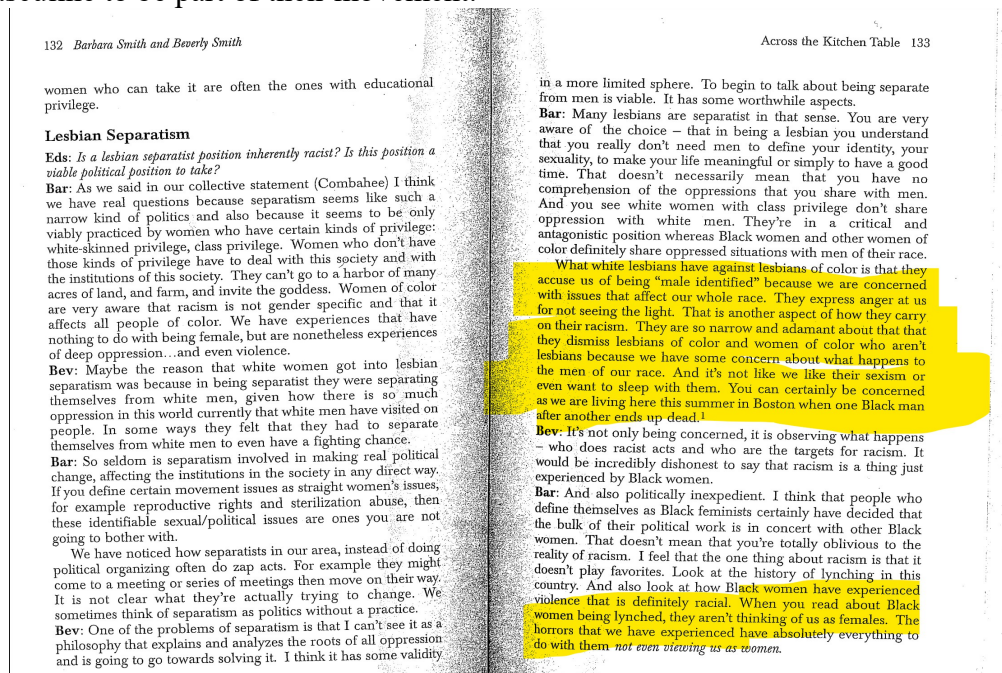
The crux of the argument on the surface of so-called "gender critical" movement, the idea that trans

people pose an existential threat to women has been fundamental to a great majority of anti-trans activism in the past 50 years. The roots of this myth are twofold: the idea that trans women are predatory men and that trans people are a threat to lesbianism. Public spaces, then, are proposed as a no-go zone for trans people.

This argument stems from several areas: the belief that no man would want to be a woman and therefore perpetuate fraud, the belief that no woman would want to be a man and therefore are swindled into trans identity, and finally, that masculinity is a fixed, static thing that can only be conferred by the presence of a penis.

A reasonable estimation of the start of this ideology is possible if looked at in the context of the civil rights movement. Like a lot of reactionary movements, backlash to the civil rights movement has been a constant in anti-trans organizing. Coming at the head of the rise of new conservatism, this posture has grown dominant in driving transphobia. In response to alliances between women, the Black Power movement, and gay liberation, reactionaries aimed fire at whatever mind-opening was occurring, and a lot of it was aimed at maintaining power.

Writers, philosophers and gender theorists Beverley and Barbara Smith discussed the phenomenon of lesbian separatism in their text “Across the Kitchen Table” and pointed out that white lesbians in the second wave movement had situated a lot of their desires for women's lib in the idea that some women were too masculine to be part of their movement.



From: Across the Kitchen Table by Bev and Barbara Smith (1980)

The Smiths opined on lesbian separatism a decade after the landmark People's Revolutionary Constitutional Convention in September of 1970. There, after Panther officials came out in support of lesbians and the gay liberation movement, certain contingents of lesbians and “lesbian-identifying women” saw the association between Black Power and Gay Lib as an existential threat. Testimony from these reactionaries matched what Bev and Barb Smith identified, that lesbian separatism was rooted in many cases in the belief that Black women were going to ruin Gay Lib. Using dehumanizing and masculine terms, white, reactionary attendees reported that the Black women were aggressive and a threat to the white women present.

The agenda committee turned out to be 3 Black men (one Panther) and 5 women, one Spanish and 4 white. The first argument arose over the keynote speaker who was expected to be Hughey P. Newton. I began to feel that I was on that railroad again. "Look," I said, "It is very painful for me to argue with you like this but I am sitting here torn whether to continue to relate to this or not. Black consciousness is very well defined and because of the efforts and struggle of Blacks its presence is heavy in this room. The oppression of Women and Gays is scarcely articulated. Some people sitting here aren't even aware of it and think I am crazy as I talk. But I am both a woman and gay and if this congress is going to reflect my awareness how can I accept a male hero figure? No matter how great a person he might be, the straight man glorified is my oppression. Do I relate to the Black movement at this time in history and say fuck it to my struggle? or do I say fuck it to anything that oppresses me even revolutionary sisters and brothers?::

were black, I'd choose to consider myself a negro first in this statement. But, since I am white, I don't like the statement. To me it is reverse racism to put black men ahead of women. I see the fundamental division within humanity as sexual, not racial, and, not being racist either rightside up or upside down, I cannot include any male group as part of the feminist struggle.

Above: two reports from anti-Black reactionaries in 1970

Myth 4: transition is a relatively new phenomenon

This myth has particular relevance to Oregon. It was here that the first United States-based gender-affirming care had been done for a man. Dr. Alan Hart was assigned by parents as female at birth but quickly asserted their male identity. Reports from Hart's hometown refer to him in masculine terms, even when describing typically "girly" things. By 1917, Hart had found a doctor in Portland, Oregon, Dr. Joshua Gilbert, who treated Dr. Hart extensively with psychiatric care before concluding he was indeed male in thought and identity. When people suggested that social transition was enough, that Hart was already capable of passing, Dr. Gilbert turned the argument on its head asking how else one would treat a man who'd been living his life earnestly and still felt a physical incongruity.

Hart had by all accounts been led down the various paths of treating him as if he were a woman in denial, treating him as a mental health case, and finally, treating him as a man that otherwise desired physical treatment to that end. In other words, even in 1917 the standards of care for trans people had been focused on the mind before all else, just as today.

Hart would go on to contribute greatly to the field of radiology.

Myth 5: trans people are a threat to children

Perhaps the most aggressive and insidious argument against trans people is the idea that trans people pose a threat to children. Coming as two arguments, first that drag queens and trans people are necessarily and overtly sexual, and second that their presence around children is a threat of predatory acts.

Popular suggestions that this is the case come from, at most, 40 cases as evidenced by the screenshot/slideshow stream often used in response to arguments against the anti-trans argument on twitter and other social media. Photos edited to appear more menacing are pasted onto a grey background with frequently irrelevant crimes are meant to be "conclusive" to the issue, and yet, no more than 5,000 people out of 2.1 million identify as trans in state jails. Offense rates by trans people have been found to be no different from their cisgendered peers.

Furthermore, a Florida report on an all-ages drag show provided no evidence of what would pass for crime if it weren't done by a trans or drag performer and is just the latest “nothingburger” to be offered as evidence of a systemic threat.

The Dec. 28 performance featured campy skits like “Screwdolph the Red-Nippled Man Deer” and shimmying, bare-chested men who wouldn’t have been out of place at a Madonna concert. Also a hip thrust or two, similar to what is sometimes indulged in by [NFL players after a touchdown](#). All of it was dutifully recorded by the undercover agents on state-issued iPhones.

But while agents took photos of three minors — who appeared to be accompanied by adults — at the Orlando drag show, they acknowledged that nothing indecent had happened on stage, according to an incident report obtained exclusively by the Miami Herald.

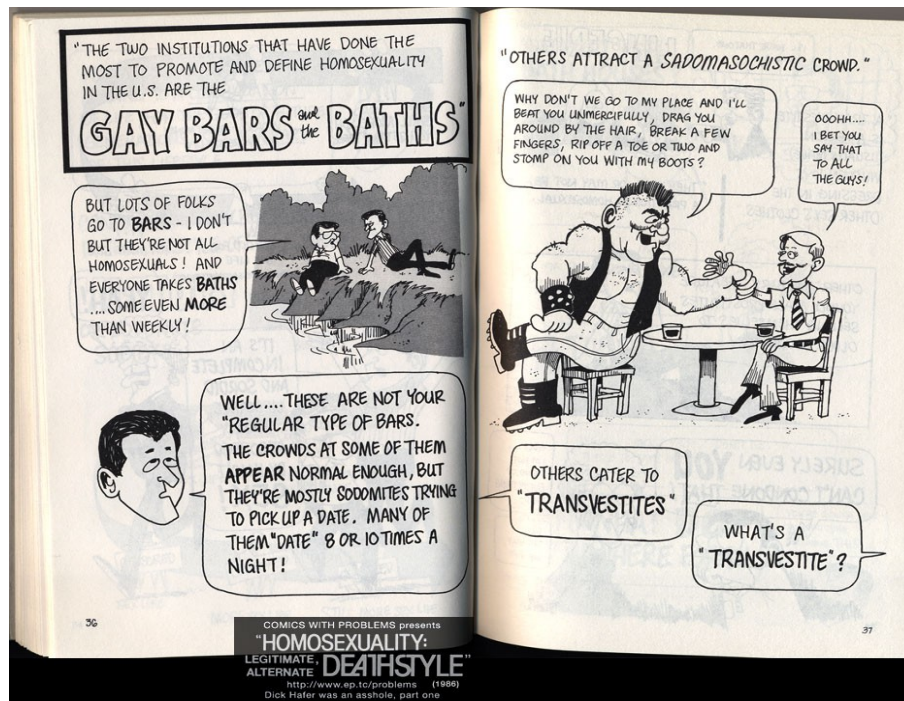
“Besides some of the outfits being provocative [bikinis and short shorts], agents did not witness any lewd acts such as exposure of genital organs,” the brief report stated. “The performers did not have any physical contact while performing to the rhythm of the music with any patrons.”

Still, the state’s Department of Business and Professional Regulation proceeded to file a complaint against the nonprofit that runs Plaza Live, claiming the venue had illegally exposed children to sexual content. The complaint, issued Feb. 3, seeks to strip the small, nonprofit theater of its liquor license — a serious blow that would likely put it out of business.

From: [Undercover agents saw nothing ‘lewd’ at Orlando drag show. Florida is going after venue anyway \(msn.com\)](#)

The prescriptive, top-down approach to morals in Florida and in various bills offered by the minority party in the Oregon Legislature are based on specious, almost empty claims. Several jpegs and blurry repeatedly filtered tiktok videos are treated as absolute proof of this threat, being pushed by people like Chaya Raichik, the pseudonymous person behind LibsofTikTok.

Rather than let parents decide for themselves, and in large numbers now, reactionaries hang the threat of predatory gay people over society, whipping up actual, predictable violence against drag shows and trans people. The argument is that wherever there are gay people there is abuse of kids is confounding in its tenacity, but still, the idea of a trans person or a gay person is nonetheless associated with violence, danger, and strangeness.



From: *Homosexuality: Legitimate, Alternate Deathstyle* by Dick Hafer

Myth 6: transgender identity is not being conflated with gayness in general

Like a vigilante wrecking group, supposed “gays against groomers” and others are continuing a longstanding argument that gay people are not being targeted by these tactics. J.K. Rowling and others have latched themselves on astroturf groups like SEGM and LGB Alliance that argue loudly that the addition of “T” to “LGBTQ” is flawed and damaging to “LGB” people.

Unfortunately, neither pro- or anti-trans activists have ever made this distinction in such concrete terms. In fact, by the late 1970s, national gay and lesbian organizations were incorporating trans identity into their community reach. The landmark National March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights in 1979, for example, included trans people, defined as transgender, transsexual, transvestite, female impersonator and drag people. In other words, a broad umbrella identity.

Trans people were also integral to the early Gay Liberation Front, who recognized the need to keep the broader community at large intact. Trans women were present at not just Stonewall, but also at Compton's Cafeteria a couple of years prior. Trans men (using the expansive usage of the term “trans”) were also present, with many drag kings making their way to the Stonewall and being present the night of Stonewall. Even transphobic activists acknowledge this fact, citing Drag King Stormé DeLarverie as the first person to set things off at Stonewall. DeLarverie would later be cited as using “he/him” pronouns while identifying as a butch lesbian.

Trans people have also suffered the same psychiatric abuses that cis gay people experienced, being tossed into psychiatric hospitals in states like Oregon for gender deviance and other similarly phrased crimes that basically involve not saying that your identity is concretely rooted in clothed, unseen genitals.

Myth 7: transition is mutilation of children

One of the most enduring fascinations of transphobic activists have been the genitals and secondary sexual characteristics of children. Bans on gender-affirming care situate themselves as protecting teens from too-early, damaging care, yet studies have shown time and again that such care is helpful to trans teens, in spite of strangely aggressive insinuations that all gay and trans people are suicidal.

Unsurprisingly, standards of care have always been situated around early psychiatric interventions and medical treatment as necessary. Rarely is any elective form of gender-affirming care given to teens under the age of 16 while medically- and psychiatric-necessary surgeries are delayed until 18. Still, this assumes too much about the consent of teens and their ability to navigate largely permanent physical changes. Anti-trans activists see trans teens as genitals and breasts and nothing else. Emotional and social health are not concerns that register unless they can be tied to vanishingly few instances of surgery complications.

Myth 8: laws against trans people are needed, just in case

Transphobic laws, drag bans, and other punitive efforts by reactionaries are often treated as being beneficial to gay people and children. This couldn't be further from the truth, as demonstrated above. Treating trans teens as broken, saying they'll "grow out of it" ignores that many people don't "grow out of It," and perhaps that's the point.

Conclusion: SUPPORT this measure as a common-sense legal shield for trans people