

# LGBTQ voters expect legislation targeting abortion, transgender health care to surge next year

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LGBTQ Americans are bracing for increased legislative attacks on reproductive rights and access to gender-affirming health care from newly-elected federal and state officials, according to a new poll commissioned by GLAAD and first shared with The Hill.

An overwhelming majority of LGBTQ voters in a post-election survey said the pace of bills introduced in Congress and state legislatures that aim to restrict abortion access and limit transgender rights isn't likely to slow anytime soon.

Roughly 80 percent of respondents said they're anticipating state and federal lawmakers — and even local school board members — continuing to put forward measures that seek to limit how transgender people may access health care, compete on sports teams or talk openly about their identities.

Eighty-two percent said they expect states to ramp up efforts to pass either partial or full bans on abortion over the next two years.

A handful of states including [Massachusetts](#) and [California](#) this year enacted laws meant to shield access to abortion and gender-affirming health care for transgender youth, but federal legislation addressing either has yet to be successfully introduced.

Senate bills to codify abortion protections [failed to pass](#) twice this year and while neither chamber of Congress has put forward legislation meant to safeguard access to gender-affirming care or strengthen the rights of transgender people, several House Republicans have introduced measures to restrict them.

Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.) in August [introduced a bill](#) that would make providing gender-affirming medical care to minors a felony punishable by up to 25 years in prison. Rep. Mike Johnson (R-La.) in October announced he was [sponsoring a measure](#) to prohibit federal dollars from being used to make “sexually-oriented” materials — including “any topic” related to sexual orientation or gender identity — available to children under the age of 10.

Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) has [pledged to introduce federal legislation](#) in next year’s GOP-controlled House to ban transgender women and girls from competing on female sports teams.

The Congress, under the control of Democrats in the House and Senate, has moved to pass legislation to enshrine same-sex and interracial marriage into federal law.

The Respect for Marriage Act received final approval from the Senate last week and is expected to clear a House vote early Thursday. President Biden has promised to swiftly sign the measure into law if it reaches his desk.

The bill’s passage could drive more LGBTQ voters to the polls in 2024, according to Thursday’s GLAAD survey, with 60 percent of respondents agreeing that passing federal legislation protecting marriage equality would make them more likely to vote in 2024 – including 59 percent of 2022 non-voters.

A majority of respondents – 57 percent – said it is “absolutely essential” for Congress to adopt federal legislation guaranteeing marriage equality. Sixty-four percent said abortion access should also be protected under federal law.

More than half of LGBTQ voters who participated in this year’s midterm elections said their decision to cast a ballot was driven by a desire to restore abortion rights and protect LGBTQ equality, according to GLAAD. More than 14 million LGBTQ Americans voted in November, the group said Thursday, most of them for Democrats.

“These high turnout numbers reflect voters’ recognition of their own power and their deep concern over rights being rolled back,” Sarah Kate Ellis, GLAAD’s president and chief executive, said in a statement. “LGBTQ people and youth are under increasing attack by

politicians and political extremists pushing baseless legislation and harmful rhetoric that leads to real-life violence, but we will not be silenced.”

Nearly half of LGBTQ people surveyed by GLAAD said the current political environment and rhetoric about LGBTQ issues have negatively impacted their mental health and made them more fearful for their personal safety. The impact is even more profound among transgender Americans – 70 percent said their emotional well-being had taken a hit and 72 percent said they feared for their safety.

More than 40 percent of respondents said they feel unsafe discussing political and LGBTQ issues on social media using their real names, including more than half of transgender respondents.

Thursday’s GLAAD survey was conducted by Pathfinder Opinion Research between Nov. 16 and Nov. 20 — the days leading up to and immediately following a deadly shooting at an LGBTQ nightclub in Colorado Springs.

In 2022, more than 300 bills seeking to curb LGBTQ rights were introduced in state legislatures across the country. Legislation targeting transgender athletes, drag performances and access to gender-affirming health care for transgender youth and young adults has already been pre-filed for the upcoming 2023 session in over a dozen states.

State lawmakers in California and Missouri have released proposed legislation to bolster nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ people and shield access to gender-affirming medical care.

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