



BLOCKING PROGRESS, ADVANCING HATE: A LOOK INTO THE VAST ANTI-LGBT NETWORK

BY JOSH ISRAEL



Accountable for Equality (AFE) was formed to educate the public about the concerted efforts of anti-LGBT extremists, who they are, where they are, and what they do.



OVERVIEW

The “800-pound gorilla” of the Christian Right, the nation’s most prominent conservative think tank, the network founded by the late anti-feminist activist Phyllis Schlafly, and an army of other anti-LGBTQ groups have successfully blocked non-discrimination laws in dozens of states and even more localities, despite popular will.

Support for LGBTQ equality in the United States has grown significantly over the past decade. Support for same-sex marriage grew from 37 percent in 2009 to 61 percent in 2019.¹ More than 60 percent of Americans say they have become more supportive of transgender rights than they were five years ago.² Surveys have consistently shown that more than 70 percent of people in the United States support broad legal protections for the LGBTQ community.³ Put simply, there has been a “sea change” in public attitudes about sexual orientation and gender identity and expression in recent years.⁴

But while marriage equality is now the law of the land and several states offer full LGBTQ non-discrimination protections,⁵ legislative progress has stalled over the past few years. A few states with sexual orientation protections have recently added more explicit gender identity/expression policies, but no new state has enacted a statewide LGBTQ non-discrimination law since Utah in 2015.⁶ This leaves 28 states with no clear state law prohibiting discrimination against gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or other queer private sector employees.⁷

This has not been for lack of trying. The Equality Federation, a national coalition of organizations, includes 44 groups in 39 states working toward full legal equality. Those grassroots organizations work with state and, where possible, local governments to advance inclusive legislation and to fight against new forms of discrimination.

¹ <https://www.pewforum.org/fact-sheet/changing-attitudes-on-gay-marriage/>

² <https://www.prii.org/research/americas-growing-support-for-transgender-rights/>

³ <https://www.prii.org/research/americas-growing-support-for-transgender-rights/>

⁴ <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/06/battle-gay-rights-over/592645/>

⁵ <https://www.freedomforallamericans.org/states/>

⁶ <https://www.npr.org/2015/03/12/392590001/utah-lgbt-anti-discrimination-bill-includes-religious-exemptions>

⁷ https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/non_discrimination_laws



Efforts to enact protections in state legislatures, local governments, and public school systems are frequently stymied by religious right activists organized by a loose coalition of national hate groups, conservative policy think tanks, and state “family” organizations. Armed with misinformation, legal threats, and a heckler’s veto, the anti-LGBTQ minority often prevails, scaring elected officials into taking no action or even retrogression.

This report will examine who these groups are and how they do it. A survey of major LGBTQ equality organizations found that while the local players vary, the experiences tends to be similar in state after state: state groups, backed by national organizations, mobilizing opposition to equality and convincing elected officials to back off.

THE NATIONAL PLAYERS

Alliance Defending Freedom

Originally known as the Alliance Defense Fund, ADF was formed 25 year ago to be the Christian Right’s law firm. The group literally aims to bring America back to the Byzantine Era: it uses an army of attorneys across the country and an eight-figure annual budget “to recover the robust Christendomic theology of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th centuries.” It has become, in the words of one critic, the “800-pound gorilla” of the movement.⁸

For a long time, ADF focused its attention mostly on litigation. As recently as a few years ago, the group claimed it “refrains from participating in or promoting any type of legislation or political parties, including handing out voter guides or reviews of judges” and that it did not lobby government officials.⁹ But after the group was exposed for its involvement in writing and promoting Arizona’s anti-LGBTQ “religious liberty” bill in 2014 and for lobbying state legislatures against same-sex marriage, ADF dropped pretense and removed the language from its website.¹⁰

⁸ <https://thinkprogress.org/the-800-pound-gorilla-of-the-christian-right-89b8cfca7051/>

⁹ <https://web.archive.org/web/20150906113414/http://www.adflegal.org/about-us/faq>

¹⁰ <https://web.archive.org/web/20180603075008/http://adflegal.org/about-us/faq>

ADF believes that legislation is needed to preserve the “God-given, constitutionally protected right to religious freedom.”¹¹ In 2014, ADF lawyer Kellie Fiedorek told a group of students that those who refuse to serve gay clients are modern-day heroes, like Rosa Parks’ civil disobedience in opposition to racial segregation.¹² It frequently provides anti-equality “model legislation” to supportive lawmakers and has reportedly partnered with the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) – the clearinghouse for conservative state model legislation – to advance legislation to defend the rights of students and faculty to engage in hate speech on college campuses.¹³

To better cover courts across the country, ADF has created an entire nationwide network of local conservative attorneys, each at the ready to represent an anti-LGBTQ client or challenge a legal protection. ADF claims more than 3,300 affiliated “allied attorneys.”¹⁴ A recent Media Matters for America [report](#) on ADF included a list of about 300 of those, noting that the cadre includes multiple state attorneys general and state lawmakers.¹⁵

ADF’s attorneys across the country frequently show up at state and local government legislative hearings to mislead lawmakers about the implications of their actions and to threaten to sue if they do not get their way.¹⁶

The Southern Poverty Law Center has designated ADF an anti-LGBT hate group, citing its efforts to recriminalize homosexuality in the United States, link homosexuality to pedophilia, and fight what it calls a “homosexual agenda” that “will destroy Christianity and society.”¹⁷

¹¹ <https://books.google.com/books?id=4VmCAGAAQBAJ&pg=PA160&lpg=PA160&dq=%22God-given,+constitutionally+protected+right+to+religious+freedom%22&source=bl&ots=iUaLLbULRn&sig=ACfU3U3h3oxZshnyugragbZdqD24EUhwjw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi93Jic-K3kAhWRN8AKHTbCAPwQ6AEwAXoECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=%22God-given%2C%20constitutionally%20protected%20right%20to%20religious%20freedom%22&f=false>

¹² https://www.goodasyou.org/good_as_you/2014/04/adfs-kellie-fiedorek-opposing-lgbt-equality-is-just-like-what-rosa-parks-did.html

¹³ <https://coloradotimesrecorder.com/2018/04/gop-legislators-intertwined-with-alliance-defending-freedom/8843/>

¹⁴ <https://www.adflegal.org/about-us>

¹⁵ https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1tTrH4gx3jLqcL_s1ERXzTwr8ubkVH1oUCiTM1EBU438/edit#gid=0

¹⁶ <https://www.adflegal.org/detailspages/press-release-details/virginia-school-district-chairman-excluding-pro-student-privacy-speakers-from-board-meeting>

¹⁷ <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/alliance-defending-freedom>



The group did not much care for the designation, dismissing it as “slander”¹⁸ – especially after it cost it its status as an eligible charity under Amazon’s Smile program.¹⁹ At an August 2018 event, then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions praised ADF, telling them “I wanted to come back here tonight partly because I wanted to say this: you are not a hate group.”²⁰ The SPLC’s chief communications officer responded by noting that any group that pushes to criminalize LGBTQ people, as ADF had, is indeed a hate group.²¹

ADF is currently pushing a Supreme Court appeal²² of an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission case against a Michigan funeral home. The federal agency determined that company and its owner discriminated against a transgender woman on the basis of sex because it would not let her dress as a woman on the job. ADF hopes the now-even-more-conservative Supreme Court will overturn this.

“Americans should be able to rely on what the law says,” ADF Vice President of Appellate Advocacy John Bursch argued. Redefining ‘sex’ to mean ‘gender identity’ creates chaos, is unfair to women and girls, and puts employers in difficult situations.” The group warned that by protecting transgender women against sex discrimination, the door would be open to also protecting transgender students and athletes.²³

In its official legal brief, ADF claimed that there is no legal basis “to treat sex as a stereotype.” Their slippery-slope argument actually warned that if the courts did so:

Employees, male and female alike, could assert such a claim following termination, alleging that they were terminated because their voice was too high (or too low), hair was too long (or too short), arms were too muscular (or not muscular enough), gait was too confident (or not enough), and so on. Because sex stereotypes are nebulous and undefined, every

¹⁸ <https://www.spiked-online.com/2019/09/06/the-violent-consequences-of-being-branded-hateful/>

¹⁹ <https://thinkprogress.org/alliance-defending-freedom-amazon-0468719394a6/>

²⁰ <https://thinkprogress.org/jeff-sessions-says-adf-not-hate-group-e0e5af4dfe70/>

²¹ <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2019/08/19/yes-frc-and-adf-are-hate-groups-heres-why>

²² <https://www.adflegal.org/detailspages/case-details/equal-employment-opportunity-commission-v.-r.g.-g.r.-harris-funeral-homes>

²³ <https://www.adflegal.org/detailspages/press-release-details/adf-to-supreme-court-redefining-sex-problematic-not-job-of-judges-govt-agencies>



employee could claim that they were unlawfully stereotyped based on a characteristic that is arguably different between men and women.

ADF also claimed that while “a sex-specific stereotype that women should not be aggressive harms women because they are women, beliefs about transgender status impact both sexes equally.” In other words, they believe it’s not sex discrimination as long as an employer discriminates equally against both male and female people who are transgender.²⁴

According to its 2016 IRS filings, the Scottsdale, Arizona-based national organization raised about \$51 million that year and about \$51 million the year before.²⁵

Concerned Women for America

Since 1979, Concerned Women for America has been a vocal force against feminism and for an Evangelical Christian-based theocracy. Its stated mission is to protect and promote “Biblical values and Constitutional principles through prayer, education, and advocacy.”²⁶ Run by Peggy Young Nance – a member of President Donald Trump’s Life Advisory Board, a Women for Trump advisory board, and a frequent adviser to his administration — the group claims 500,000 members and 450 “prayer/action” chapters across the country.²⁷

Among their “concerns” are “sexual promiscuity [and] cohabitation,” “disrespect for family and for the unique contribution of fathers and mothers,” and attempts “to eliminate natural distinctions between men and women.

The CFWA’s members don’t just pray against LGBTQ equality; they actively spread misinformation about it. A recent brochure they produced, “How Gender Identity Policies Hurt the Progress of Women and Girls” claims that “science does not support assertions that men are, or can become, biological women” so transgender women should not benefit from laws designed to protect women

²⁴ https://adflegal.blob.core.windows.net/mainsite-new/docs/default-source/documents/legal-documents/equal-employment-opportunity-commission-v.-r.g.-g.r.-harris-funeral-homes/eeoc-v-r-g-g-r-harris-funeral-homes---petitioner-brief.pdf?sfvrsn=9e82b462_8

²⁵ <https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF/Images/2017/541/660/2017-541660459-0fb01b68-9.pdf>

²⁶ <https://concernedwomen.org/about/vision-mission/>

²⁷ <https://concernedwomen.org/about/our-experts/penny-young-nance/> and <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-trump/trump-campaign-seeks-to-mobilize-women-in-2020-battleground-states-idUSKCN1VC29D>



from violence. It warns, despite widespread evidence to the contrary, that treating transgender people based on their identity “can be harmful for domestic violence shelters that make housing determinations based on biological sex.”²⁸

According to its 2016 IRS filings, the Washington, D.C.-based national organization raised about \$4 million that year and about \$3.8 million the year before.²⁹

Eagle Forum

The Eagle Forum was created 1975 by anti-ERA activist Phyllis Schlafly, who served as president until her death in 2016.³⁰ With a network of state Eagle Forum groups, the organization has reach into state capitals and advocates for the far-right policies embraced by its founder. CWFA’s current president is Eunie Smith, a Schlafly protégé.

The group believes LGBTQ equality is a “stunningly radical” notion and warns that pro-equality activists want to “impose an extremist LGBT agenda onto every facet of life.”³¹

According to its 2016 IRS filings, the Alton, Illinois-based national organization raised about \$275,000 that year and more than a million the year before.³²

Family Policy Alliance

Originally called CitizenLink, the Family Policy Alliance is the lobbying arm of James Dobson’s Focus on the Family empire. With a pervasive network of state affiliates, the group provides materials and funding for the ground forces operating in state capitals.

A review of the group’s IRS filings from the past several years finds that the Family Policy Alliance has distributed about a million dollars to state religious right organizations over a three-year period. This includes \$281,717 and \$129,535 donations to Florida Family Action, a \$111,766

²⁸ <https://concernedwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/How-Gender-Identitiy-Policies-Hurt-Women-and-Girls.pdf>

²⁹ <https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF/Images/2017/953/580/2017-953580834-0e86cf06-9.pdf>

³⁰ <https://eagleforum.org/>

³¹ <https://eagleforum.org/publications/insights/equality-act-would-undo-trumps-most-significant-achievements.html>

³² <https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF/Images/2016/510/189/2016-510189035-0ead1144-90.pdf>



contribution to North Carolina Family Policy Council Action, \$109,736 in support for the Family Council Action Committee in Arkansas, and donations to likeminded groups in more than a dozen other states.³³

In August 2016, Focus on the Family’s *Citizen* magazine highlighted the playbook for how the state affiliates operate and how they seek to overrule the pro-equality majority, even in very liberal states. It suggests developing Sunday School curriculum, enlisting pastors to speak out during their sermons, and finding multi-ethnic groups of fellow bigots. One member group’s leader is quoted as saying in her state, “you have to accept that it’s a marathon, not a sprint. People who are [political] campaign-minded tend to be really good in sprints, but for real change to happen, it takes a different mindset—the mindset of missionaries. Our situation could take generations to change.”³⁴

According to its 2016 IRS filings, the Colorado Springs, Colorado-based national organization raised about \$1.9 million that year and about \$2.8 million the year before.³⁵

Family Research Council

Under the leadership of long-time president Tony Perkins, FRC is among the nation’s most socially conservative advocacy organizations. Cathy Ruse, senior fellow for legal studies, has been among the most vocal critics of protections for transgender students in public schools and LGBTQ-inclusive sex education programs. She criticized one such policy as a vote “to open girls’ bathrooms, showers, and sports teams to biological boys, and vice versa,” arguing that if “biological sex has no meaning, boy bodies are no different than girl bodies, despite what your lying eyes tell you.”³⁶

Her anti-transgender commentary has been often promoted by other anti-LGBTQ groups and has been published in the Heritage Foundation’s Daily Signal.³⁷

³³ https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF_Images/2017/200/960/2017-200960855-0f703515-90.pdf

https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF_Images/2016/200/960/2016-200960855-0dd5ba07-90.pdf

https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF_Images/2015/200/960/2015-200960855-0ccf3a41-90.pdf

³⁴ <https://origin.focusonthefamily.com/socialissues/citizen-magazine/what-to-do-when-your-state-is-blue>

³⁵ https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF_Images/2017/200/960/2017-200960855-0f703515-90.pdf

³⁶ <https://www.frc.org/op-eds/fairfax-county-votes-to-tell-boys-they-might-be-girls> <https://www.frc.org/get.cfm?i=PV18K09> <https://www.frc.org/op-eds/lgbt-activists-to-high-schoolers-come-into-this-private-booth-to-talk-about-sex>

³⁷ <https://www.dailysignal.com/2019/02/08/the-tremendous-power-of-transgender-ideologues/>





Peter Sprigg, senior fellow for policy studies, has long headed up FRC’s anti-gay efforts. In 2014, he testified before the District of Columbia’s city council opposing a ban on conversion therapy for minors, inaccurately claiming “abundant anecdotal evidence that such therapies work” and “scientific evidence” that “reorientation treatment has been helpful to many.”³⁸

The Southern Poverty Law Center has designated FRC an anti-LGBT hate group, citing its “false claims about the LGBT community based on discredited research and junk science.”³⁹

According to its 2016 IRS filings, the Washington, D.C.-based national organization raised about \$16 million that year and about \$12 million the year before.⁴⁰

Heritage Foundation and its Daily Signal

Perhaps no organization has been as responsible for the conservative moment’s direction over the past several decades as the Heritage Foundation. Now run by former George W. Bush Office of Personnel Management director Kay Cole James, the organization has a vast budget, serves as the policy shop for many conservative lawmakers, and employs some of the most far-right voices in the American political discourse. In recent years, it has veered even further to the right.⁴¹

While the organization is better known for other conservative policies, it is a powerful force in Washington, D.C. and around the country in opposing LGBTQ rights.

In November 2018, Heritage published a report by its anti-LGBTQ researcher Ryan T. Anderson entitled “Gender Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Laws Are Not Fairness for All.”

“SOGI laws are about forcing all Americans to embrace—and live out—certain beliefs about human sexuality,” Anderson claimed. “They are not about protecting the freedom of people to live as LGBT, but about coercing everyone else to support, facilitate, and endorse such actions.”

³⁸ <https://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF14F67.pdf>

³⁹ <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/family-research-council>

⁴⁰ <https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF/Images/2017/521/792/2017-521792772-0ee3caeb-9.pdf>

⁴¹ <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/09/the-fall-of-the-heritage-foundation-andhttps://concernedwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/How-Gender-Identity-Policies-Hurt-Women-and-Girls.pdfthe-death-of-republican-ideas/279955/>



This report and other writings⁴² by Anderson are often cited by anti-LGBTQ activists as academic cover for their efforts to block equal rights legislation.⁴³

In an attempt to create a veneer of progressive credibility, Heritage has also worked to mobilize a group of so-called feminists who oppose treating transgender women as women. This group – commonly known as “TERFs” (trans-exclusionary radical feminists) – argues that providing equal protections for trans women somehow threatens their own safety and equality. Back in January, Anderson hosted a Heritage panel to attack the federal Equality Act, featuring TERFs who demeaned trans woman. These “feminists” were presented as members of “the Left” and attacked the non-discrimination proposal as the “Women Erasure Act.”⁴⁴ Through stunts like this, Heritage provoked a negative reaction from LGBTQ advocates and then tried to give the impression that the progressive moment was turning on itself.⁴⁵

The state groups then blast out Heritage’s pseudo-academic presentations, making the think-tank one of the top sources for anti-LGBTQ online misinformation.⁴⁶

The organization is also home to its own online conservative news site called Daily Signal. Through that, Heritage is able to present a consistently anti-LGBTQ spin on the news, often publishing Anderson’s [anti-LGBTQ screeds](#) and breathlessly warning that activists are trying to “bamboozle” Americans into believing kids are born transgender and that non-discrimination laws will let all men stalk women in the ladies’ restroom.⁴⁷

According to its 2016 IRS filings, the Washington, D.C.-based national organization raised about \$82 million that year and about \$82 million the year before.⁴⁸

⁴² <https://eagleforum.org/publications/insights/equality-act-would-undo-trumps-most-significant-achievements.html>

⁴³ <https://www.cnsnews.com/commentary/john-stonestreet/human-sexualities-new-orthodoxy-punishing-lgbt-dissent-through-sogi-laws> ; <https://adflegal.org/detailspages/blog-details/allianceedge/2019/06/20/7-questions-with-ryan-t-anderson-on-the-misguided-fairness-for-all-proposal>

⁴⁴ <https://www.mediamatters.org/alliance-defending-freedom/anti-trans-activists-left-joined-right-wing-heritage-foundation-rail>

⁴⁵ <https://twitter.com/RyanTAnd/status/1093147471524651009>

⁴⁶ <https://www.azpolicy.org/equality-act-petition/>
https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:JI9yY_mJvBAJ:https://www.familyfoundation.org/blog/the-so-called-equality-act+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us

⁴⁷ <https://www.dailysignal.com/2019/03/29/kids-arent-born-transgender-so-dont-let-advocates-bamboozle-you/>

⁴⁸ https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF_Images/2017/237/327/2017-237327730-0fe2f49d-9.pdf





Liberty Counsel

Until a Kentucky county clerk named Kim Davis became a national figure for her refusal to do her job and issue marriage licenses to her constituents, Chairman Mat Staver and his legal group were not very well known. But after the Supreme Court’s marriage equality decision, this anti-LGBTQ organization seized a great deal of national media attention.

Staver helped create Liberty University’s law school and served as its dean from 2004 to 2014.⁴⁹ The organization maintains close ties with the University and its president Jerry Falwell Jr.⁵⁰ Falwell has been a vocal opponent of LGBTQ rights and a member of President Donald Trump’s Education Task Force.⁵¹

Staver and company have frequently filed cases – often with little legal merit – aimed at allowing anti-LGBTQ people to discriminate.

Liberty Counsel’s website makes no bones about their anti-LGBTQ worldview, comparing same-sex marriage to redefining gravity. “Marriage is the preeminent and the most fundamental of all human social institutions: A bond between one man and one woman, intended for life, and open to the gift of children. Children do best in a home with a mom and a dad,” it inaccurately states. “The institutions of civil government should defend marriage and not seek to undermine it. Civil institutions do not create marriage nor can they manufacture a right to marry for those who are incapable of marriage.”⁵²

The Southern Poverty Law Center has designated Liberty Counsel an anti-LGBT hate group, citing its “advocating for anti-LGBT discrimination under the guise of religious liberty.”⁵³

According to its 2014 IRS filings (the most recent available), the Orlando, Florida-based national organization raised about \$5.5 million that year and about \$4.2 million the year before.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ <http://www.liberty.edu/news/index.cfm?PID=18495&MID=132382>

⁵⁰ <https://www.mediamatters.org/fox-friends/fox-friends-liberty-universitys-jerry-falwell-jr-blatantly-lies-about-his-and-libertys>

⁵¹ <https://www.glaad.org/tap/jerry-falwell-jr>

⁵² <https://lc.org/protecting-marriage-and-family>

⁵³ <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/liberty-counsel>

⁵⁴ https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF_Images/2015/592/986/2015-592986294-0c30d9cb-9.pdf



National Christian Foundation

Through its National Christian Charitable Foundation, the Alpharetta, Georgia-based NCF operates a [donor-advised fund](#) and allows conservative Christian donors to bankroll the Christian Right movement anonymously. Its annual revenue is around \$1.5 billion and the donations are all tax-deductible.⁵⁵

Under the leadership of CEO T. Christopher Holdorf, former corporate executive and megachurch executive pastor⁵⁶, the NCF is very much the piggy bank for anti-LGBTQ organizations. Its stated mission: “Mobilizing resources by inspiring biblical generosity.”⁵⁷

In 2016 alone, the foundation gave more than \$15.5 million to the Alliance Defending Freedom, \$91,100 to Concerned Women for America, \$27,400 to Eagle Forum-connected entities, more than \$550,000 to Family Policy Alliance-connected organizations, more than \$2.2 million to the Family Research Council, more than \$4.2 million to the Heritage Foundation, and \$129,139 to the Liberty Counsel.

It also distributed funds directly to state groups, including a \$33,250 donation to the Florida Family Policy Council.⁵⁸

STOPPING PROGRESS IN THE STATE LEGISLATURES

Arizona

Cathi Herrod, president of the Center for Arizona Policy (CAP) for more than a decade, has been front and center leading the opposition to LGBTQ rights in Arizona. She and her group were honored

⁵⁵ <https://www.ncfgiving.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2017-NCCF-Inc.-Form-990-as-filed-Public-Inspection-Copy.pdf>

⁵⁶ <https://www.ncfgiving.com/leaders/chris-holdorf/>

⁵⁷ <https://www.ncfgiving.com/about/>

⁵⁸ <https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF/Images/2016/581/493/2016-581493949-0e9b32a6-9.pdf>



by their frequent partner, the Arizona-headquartered Alliance Defending Freedom, with their 2014 “Alliance Award.”^{59 60}

“The relationship between CAP and ADF is a great example of the meaning of ‘alliance,’” Herrod boasted in an ADF 2012 profile piece. “Pastors in Arizona now look at CAP as being the public policy ‘go-to,’ and ADF as being the legal ‘go-to.’”

“To those who believe Christians shouldn’t participate in the legislative process or engage in public policy – look to Arizona,” Herrod added. “When we pull together as people of faith ... when we register to vote, vote our values, and participate in the legislative process, we can make a difference. And we see the triumph of good over evil.”

Herrod’s and ADF’s view of what “triumph of good” entails was on display in 2014 with the state’s notorious license to discriminate bill.⁶¹ [SB 1062](#), a so-called “Religious Freedom Restoration Act,” (RFRA) aimed to grant any individual, business, or organization the right to ignore non-discrimination laws as long as the discrimination was done in the name of a religious viewpoint. The bill passed in the Republican-controlled state legislature, generated a national outcry from businesses and celebrities,⁶² and was ultimately vetoed by Republican Governor Jan Brewer.⁶³ In her veto message, she noted that the legislation did not “address a specific and present concern” and that she knew of no examples of business owners actually having their religious liberty violated.⁶⁴

In late 2015, the Campaign for Accountability filed public records requests with the state of Arizona to determine how anti-LGBTQ legislation like this gets filed. In its 2016 “[Documenting Discrimination: How the Religious-Right Convinces Politicians to Enact Anti-LGBT Legislation](#),” the non-partisan watchdog described a “close working relationship between state legislators, the Center for Arizona Policy, Alliance Defending Freedom, and the Family Research Council.”

⁵⁹ <http://www.adflegal.org/detailspages/faith-and-justice-details/cathi-herrod-president-center-for-arizona-policy>

⁶⁰ <https://www.azpolicy.org/about/leadership-team/cathi-herrod/>

⁶¹ <https://thinkprogress.org/arizona-lawmaker-proposes-religious-license-to-discriminate-against-lgbt-people-d1702bab11ae/>

⁶² <https://thinkprogress.org/conservative-lawmakers-and-arizona-businesses-urge-governor-to-veto-anti-gay-bill-bc93cf359d5a/>

⁶³ <https://thinkprogress.org/facing-overwhelming-opposition-arizona-governor-vetoes-anti-gay-bill-4378c37ecd05/>

⁶⁴ https://www.azfamily.com/gov-brewer-s-statement-on-sb/article_6fe496e1-77a1-5afa-b5be-72ca23a2fa8b.html



According to the report:

As the Arizona bill gained momentum within the legislature, CAP was working behind the scenes at every step, often in tandem with ADF. Before the 2014 legislative session even started, CAP representatives discussed the legislation with aides to Gov. Brewer. On January 6, Josh Kredit, CAP’s legal counsel, emailed Michael Hunter, Gov. Brewer’s Director of Policy, and Joe Sciarrotta Jr., Gov. Brewer’s General Counsel, to thank them for meeting with him and Ms. Herrod, head of CAP. Mr. Kredit also noted that CAP would remove specific phrases from the RFRA bill, as requested by the Governor’s staff.

When CAP was unable to allay the Brewer administration’s concerns, Herrod brought in ADF’s Joe LaRue to explain and defend the legislation’s language.

And, according to CNN, the two groups largely wrote the bill based on ADF model legislation. “They didn’t just push for the bill they also helped write the bill. That’s what representatives from both organizations tell us,” Anderson Cooper explained in a 2015 segment. He also featured a clip of La Rue testifying for SB 1062, bragging: “We have been heavily involved with both federal and state RFRA. We provide testimony across the nation to states that are considering RFRA or considering amending RFRA such as Arizona is considering with Senate bill.”⁶⁵

The Campaign for Accountability report also noted that CAP’s legal counsel Josh Kredit wrote in an email at the time that FRC and other conservative groups were actively working with them to defend the legislation (FRC had partnered with CAP a couple of years earlier on an Arizona state legislative resolution to support the Boy Scouts of America and its now-abandoned prohibition on openly gay members, volunteers, and staff). And, it observed, CAP and ADF rely on the same secretive funders and partnered on a 2008 ballot initiative to prohibit same-sex unions.

CAP received thousands in contributions from the Family Policy Alliance⁶⁶ and from ADF.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1402/25/acd.01.html>

⁶⁶ https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF_Images/2016/200/960/2016-200960855-0dd5ba07-90.pdf and https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF_Images/2015/200/960/2015-200960855-0ccf3a41-90.pdf

⁶⁷ https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF_Images/2017/541/660/2017-541660459-0fb01b68-9.pdf



North Carolina

In what may be the most notorious anti-equality legislation of recent years, the North Carolina state legislature enacted HB2 in a 2016 special session. The bill prohibited transgender students and adults from using the bathroom associated with their gender identity and barred local governments from adopting any LGBTQ-inclusive non-discrimination ordinances.⁶⁸ The measure was a direct response to a non-discrimination ordinances (similar to those already on the books in most other major U.S. cities) passing in the city of Charlotte.

HB2 had the strong backing of the North Carolina Values Coalition and its executive director Tami Fitzgerald.⁶⁹ The group circulated petitions to defend what it framed as a “compassionate, reasonable law” and a matter of “privacy and safety.”⁷⁰ ⁷¹ Its political action committee ran statewide ads warning that without the law, “grown men” would be allowed in “bathrooms, showers, and locker rooms with young girls.”⁷²

The coalition has received tens of thousands of dollars in funding from the Family Policy Alliance.⁷³

The NCVC coordinated with Concerned Women for America’s North Carolina chapter, wealthy right-wing activist Art Pope’s conservative Civitas Institute, and a handful of other groups to defend the law to “keep NC safe.”⁷⁴ Then-Governor Pat McCrory (R) signed the legislation and became its national defender.⁷⁵

Equality North Carolina called it “the most sweeping anti-LGBT bill in the nation.”⁷⁶ Everyone from Barack Obama to Donald Trump denounced HB2.⁷⁷ ⁷⁸ But it was the backlash from the sports

⁶⁸ <https://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2015E2/Bills/House/PDF/H2v4.pdf>

⁶⁹ https://www.ncvalues.org/nc_stands_firmly_behind_hb2

⁷⁰ https://www.ncvalues.org/roy_cooper_bathroom_plan_petition

⁷¹ https://www.ncvalues.org/nc_values_statement_on_hb2_repeal_vote

⁷² <https://www.ncvalues.org/hb2ad>

⁷³ <https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF/Images/2017/200/960/2017-200960855-0f703515-9O.pdf>

⁷⁴ <http://keepmyncsafe.com/business-faith-leaders/?fbclid=IwAR00RdoRwOcHetu6U1-1KiiijVMzPGDvxdqFBc1wNL6SOziK35qEwStpVU>

⁷⁵ <https://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/politics-government/article135261124.html>

⁷⁶ <https://equalitync.org/news/repealHB2/>

⁷⁷ <https://www.wral.com/obama-says-hb2-should-be-overturned/15657287/>

⁷⁸ <https://abc11.com/politics/donald-trump-comes-out-against-north-carolinas-hb2/1302289/>





world,⁷⁹ entertainers, and business community that really shook the state, with estimates that it would cost North Carolina's economy more than \$3 billion.^{80 81} PayPal's decision not to move its new operations center to Charlotte, N.C. due to HB2 was mocked in an angry Daily Signal article, but helped solidify public opposition to the law.⁸² McCrory lost re-election in November 2016, in large part due to his unflinching support for the unpopular and costly law.⁸³

The following year, ADF huddled with GOP state senator Dan Bishop, one of the bill's chief writers, to attempt to undermine a proposed partial HB2 replacement via a religious exemption for anti-LGBTQ people. In an email to an ADF attorney, Bishop infamously compared himself to Oskar Schindler (the German businessman who famously saved the lives of Jews during the Holocaust), suggesting he would save "as many as we can" from having to adhere to non-discrimination laws – an analogy that paints LGBTQ North Carolinians as Nazis.⁸⁴

Ohio

Senate Bill 11, the Ohio Fairness Act, was introduced for the fifth time earlier this year in the state's legislature. If enacted, it would finally give the Ohio's LGBTQ community statewide employment, housing, and public accommodations protections.⁸⁵

The legislation enjoys widespread support from groups like the state's AFL-CIO, Chamber of Commerce, Equality Ohio, and TransOhio.⁸⁶ To date, only supporters have had a chance to testify on the legislation at legislative hearings. But the state's most prominent anti-LGBTQ organization Citizens for Community Values and its president Aaron Baer have already signaled their strong opposition to the proposal, calling it unnecessary.⁸⁷

⁷⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/22/sports/basketball/nba-all-star-game-moves-charlotte-transgender-bathroom-law.html>

⁸⁰ <https://www.esquire.com/news-politics/news/a43931/north-carolina-anti-lgbt-law-boycott/>

⁸¹ <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/03/27/bathroom-bill-to-cost-north-carolina-376-billion.html>

⁸² <https://www.dailysignal.com/2016/04/06/8-questions-for-paypal-on-its-decision-to-boycott-north-carolina/>

⁸³ <https://www.newsobserver.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/rob-christensen/article119693873.html>

⁸⁴ <https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2019/07/republican-claims-stopping-lgbtq-equality-like-saving-jews-holocaust/>

⁸⁵ <https://www.ohio.com/news/20190313/bill-to-prohibit-lgbtq-discrimination-in-ohio-receives-first-hearing>

⁸⁶ <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-committee-documents?id=GA133-SB-11>

⁸⁷ <https://www.stateneews.org/post/lawmakers-call-lgbtq-protections-ohios-anti-discrimination-policy>





“There is no doubt that the proponents of this bill have run a campaign of fear and intimidation to try and bully people to either support this bill or be quiet on the bill. Nobody wants to be called a bigot. Nobody wants to be seen as anti-LGBT. But you can support and love your LGBT neighbors and still see this bill as harmful,” Baer told Statehouse News Bureau in May 2019.⁸⁸

While proponents work to pass those statewide protections, ADF filed a lawsuit in April challenging an Ohio city’s nondiscrimination ordinance. The group objected that this law lacks an exception so religious schools may freely discriminate.⁸⁹

The Eagle Forum’s Ohio chapter warned its members in its July 2019 newsletter that this “SOGI bill, misnamed the Ohio Fairness Act by its supporters, has had three hearings in the Senate Judiciary Committee this spring. *SB 11 needs to be defeated*, since its main purpose is to advance the LGBTQ agenda.”⁹⁰

South Dakota

In 2015 and 2016, as anti-LGBTQ bills were popping up around the country, the conservative majority in the South Dakota state legislature attempted to push forward multiple pro-discrimination bills. One would have granted special legal protections to groups that choose to discriminate against same-sex couples; another would have barred transgender athletes from participating in school sports teams matching their gender identity.⁹¹

In February 2016, ADF legal counsel Matt Sharp offered testimony via telephone in favor of both bills. He said that they would “ensure government nondiscrimination in matters of religious beliefs and moral convictions,” and ensure birth certificates are the standard “in identifying a student’s sexual identity for purpose of participation in high school activities.”⁹²

⁸⁸ <https://www.statenews.org/post/lgbtq-ohioans-use-senate-hearing-share-stories-discrimination>

⁸⁹ <https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2019/04/04/catholic-school-files-lawsuit-against-ohio-city/>

⁹⁰ <https://eagleforum.org/summer-2019-newsletter-for-eagle-forum-of-ohio.html>

⁹¹ <https://thinkprogress.org/national-conservative-groups-descend-on-south-dakota-to-help-advance-anti-lgbt-bills-9f3666ecab6/>

⁹² <https://adflegal.org/detailspages/press-release-details/adf-attorney-to-testify-on-govt-nondiscrimination-student-athlete-bills-in-sd>



ADF and Liberty Counsel both promised to provide free legal representation to school districts sued for complying with the anti-transgender restrictions if they were enacted.⁹³

Among those pushing for the anti-trans bill were Mark Chase of the South Dakota Family Policy Council, who raised concern about “social re-engineering through and utilizing our teenage children,”⁹⁴ and Concerned Women for America.⁹⁵

Both bills passed in the state House but neither made it through the Senate, thanks to strong opposition from Equality South Dakota and national pro-equality groups.^{96 97 98}

Virginia

In Virginia, the Republican-controlled state legislature operates in virtual lockstep with the anti-LGBTQ Family Foundation of Virginia. Its conservative majorities listen closely to the marching orders they receive from the group’s president, Victoria Cobb, for fear of receiving a poor score on the group’s [legislative scorecard](#).

Bans on mental health providers offering youth conversion therapy – a form of junk science used to try to “cure” LGBTQ kids – have been enacted in 18 states and the District of Columbia. They have passed in Democratic- and Republican-controlled state legislatures and been signed into law by governors of both parties. When pro-equality lawmakers – with the strong backing of [Equality Virginia](#)⁹⁹ – filed legislation in 2018 to stop licensed counselors from engaging in his harmful practice, supporters packed the committee hearing room.¹⁰⁰

Members of the Senate Committee on Education and Health sat politely as a parade of Virginians testified in favor of the legislation. A family therapist, a clinical social worker, a school psychologist,

⁹³ <https://thinkprogress.org/national-conservative-groups-descend-on-south-dakota-to-help-advance-anti-lgbt-bills-9f3666ecab6/>

⁹⁴ <https://onenewsnow.com/education/2015/05/04/south-dakotas-battle-re-transgender-policies>

⁹⁵ <https://kelo.com/podcasts/greg-belfrage-show/935/state-legislature-is-debating-transgender-issues-listeners-weigh-in/>

⁹⁶ https://web.archive.org/web/20180417140704/http://sdlegislature.gov/Legislative_Session/Bills/Bill.aspx?Bill=1107&Session=2016 https://web.archive.org/web/20190201040034/http://sdlegislature.gov/Legislative_Session/Bills/Bill.aspx?Bill=1112&Session=2016

⁹⁷ https://www.eqsd.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/EqSD_Voting_Record.pdf

⁹⁸ https://lambdalegal.org/blog/20160225_victory-south-dakota-hb1107

⁹⁹ <https://www.equalityvirginia.org/equality-virginia-at-the-general-assembly/>

¹⁰⁰ https://virginia-senate.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=3&clip_id=1878





and several licensed professional counselors each spoke about the need for the bill and the higher rates of suicide associated with conversion therapy.

Then Chris Freund, the Family Foundation’s vice president of policy and communications, stood up and told the story of a man he knew who had been “struggling with same-sex attraction” but received counseling and is now married to a woman. “There are people who have had unwanted same-sex attraction that no longer do so because of counseling or therapy...” he claimed, “and there are thousands of them.” He was joined by a representative from the Virginia Assembly of Independent Baptists who compared the bill to forced sterilization, and a representative from the Virginia Catholic Conference. After their opposition, the Republican majority killed the bill on an 8 to 7 party line vote.¹⁰¹

While an effort is underway by Governor Ralph Northam’s administration to address this issue through the regulatory process, the Family Foundation is fighting it tooth and nail. In an August [blog post](#), the group accused Northam of trying to “lock teens in Transgenderism” and urged Virginians to file official comments opposing the proposed regulations. The author of the blog post was none other than FRC’s Cathy Ruse.

This is typical of the way the Family Foundation and its national allies use their influence in Richmond to thwart so-called “special rights” for “SOGI” (“sexual orientation” and “gender identity”). Bills to add these categories to the state’s hate crime law, to protect public employees from employment discrimination, and to bring the state code in line with the Supreme Court’s marriage equality ruling have each died in the legislature in recent years after the Family Foundation attacked them.¹⁰² It mobilizes its membership, warns conservative legislators against even the most minor pro-LGBTQ protections, publishes op/eds and usually blocks any legislation, no matter how popular and no matter how many equality advocates show up to demand action.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ <http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?181+vot+S04V0033+SB0245>

¹⁰² <https://www.equalityvirginia.org/equality-virginia-at-the-general-assembly/>

¹⁰³ <https://thinkprogress.org/how-ken-cuccinellis-position-on-sodomy-could-set-numerous-sexual-predators-free-2ec2d514aa30/>
https://www.roanoke.com/opinion/commentary/cobb-equality-virginia-and-the-family-foundation-agree/article_47d395c3-b38a-5779-abaa-0439444208e9.html





FIGHTING EQUALITY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, TOO

Jacksonville, Florida

In 2012, 2016, and again in 2017, Florida’s largest city considered amending its human rights ordinance to include sexual orientation and gender identity – two categories not expressly protected by state law.¹⁰⁴ The effort enjoyed the strong backing of the local LGBTQ community, the local chamber of commerce, and Equality Florida, the state’s leading LGBTQ-rights group.^{105 106}

Spearheading the effort to defeat these protections was John Stemberg, head of the Florida Family Policy Council and its affiliated Florida Family Action legislative arm.¹⁰⁷ His organizations have received more than \$450,000 from the Family Policy Alliance in recent years, according to public disclosures, and at least \$50,000 from ADF.^{108 109}

During the 2012 debate, Stemberg organized the opposition to the bill, denouncing the “dangerous” and “artificial, social construct called gay.”

“It’s in your face; it’s shoving down your throat; and it’s intimidation. It’s not just, ‘let’s be left alone and let’s just have rights.’ It’s now forcing everyone else to agree—by the force of law and lawsuits with money damages. That’s what we oppose,” he explained.¹¹⁰

The 2012 effort failed narrowly and a 2016 proposal never made it for a vote in the Jacksonville City Council. In 2017, Stemberg’s groups again galvanized the opposition to what it called the

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.firstcoastnews.com/article/news/local/jacksonville-city-council-votes-to-add-lgbt-to-the-city-hro/77-408359118>

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.jacksonville.com/article/20150224/NEWS/801239948>

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.eqfl.org/2017/press10>

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/conservatives-denounce-anti-god-human-rights-ordinance-in-jacksonville/>
<https://www.flfamily.org/press-releases/controversial-jacksonville-sexual-orientation-gender-identity-expression-non-discrimination-ordinance-296-decisively-defeated>
<http://equalitymatters.org/blog/201408260001>

¹⁰⁸ <https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF/Images/2017/200/960/2017-200960855-0f703515-90.pdf>

<https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF/Images/2016/200/960/2016-200960855-0dd5ba07-90.pdf>

<https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF/Images/2015/200/960/2015-200960855-0ccf3a41-90.pdf>

¹⁰⁹ <https://pdf.guidestar.org/PDF/Images/2015/541/660/2015-541660459-0cb5a16a-9.pdf>

¹¹⁰ <https://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/conservatives-denounce-anti-god-human-rights-ordinance-in-jacksonville/>





“dangerous anti-liberty ordinance,” while warning its protections would imperil “women’s privacy, safety and dignity” and “allow the government to punish businesses and ministries who wish to live, work and serve the community in accordance with the dictates of their faith.”¹¹¹

The council passed the 2017 bill, 12 to 6, notwithstanding FFPC’s opposition.¹¹² Despite this veto-proof margin, Liberty Counsel launched a last-ditch¹¹³ unsuccessful effort to convince the mayor to veto the bill.

Days after the law’s enactment, Tony Perkins lamented in his FRC “Washington Update” that the city had “[kicked] down the door between government and religious liberty.”¹¹⁴

Fairfax County, Virginia

While Virginia localities are greatly limited as to what they can do without the express permission of the state government, the state constitution explicitly grants local school boards the authority to generally run their own affairs. A 2015 [advisory opinion](#) from Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring (D) not only found that this includes the power to protect LGBTQ students, faculty, and staff from discrimination, but a responsibility to protect “individual rights.”

Fairfax County, Virginia, is a diverse and massive suburban community near Washington, D.C. With the tenth largest school system in the nation, the county’s twelve-member school board sets policies for more than 180,000 students and more than 24,000 full-time employees.¹¹⁵ Weeks after Herring released his advisory opinion, a Fairfax County school board member proposed adding gender identity to the school district’s existing non-discrimination policy (sexual orientation had been added a year earlier).

Perhaps spurred by the community’s proximity to the nation’s capital, several national anti-LGBTQ organizations rushed into action in hopes of stopping the change. Days later, thanks to action alerts

¹¹¹ <https://floridafamilyaction.org/jaxhro2017/>

¹¹² <https://www.firstcoastnews.com/article/news/local/jacksonville-city-council-votes-to-add-lgbt-to-the-city-hro/77-408359118>

¹¹³ <https://lc.org/newsroom/details/022117-jacksonville-rallies-mayor-to-veto-lgbt-law-1>

¹¹⁴ <https://web.archive.org/web/20170810054336/http://www.frc.org/updatearticle/20170227/ark-park>

¹¹⁵ <https://www.fcps.edu/about-fcps>



sent out by an array of anti-equality organizations – including the Family Foundation of Virginia¹¹⁶ — hordes of furious opponents packed the school board’s meeting room, shouting at and threatening the pro-equality majority on the school board and those members of the community testifying in support of trans inclusion. Many of these protesters came from other jurisdictions in the D.C. metropolitan area.

During the meeting, senior counsel Casey Maddox – a resident of the Fairfax County – testified on behalf of ADF. He argued that the policy “violates students’ and parents’ rights” and suggested that the board should instead adopt ADF’s own “model policy.” Dismissing concerns that the Obama Department of Education might be pressuring schools to adopt non-discrimination protections, Maddox said that “no federal law requires public schools to allow boys in the girls’ restrooms or girls in the boys’ restrooms,” inferring that transgender boys are not boys and transgender girls are not girls.¹¹⁷

Around that time, three more ADF attorneys sent a letter to the school board claiming that non-discrimination protections would “seriously endanger students’ privacy and safety,” and suggesting that such a policy “would clearly expose” the school district “to tort liability.” After that stick, the lawyers offered a carrot: they said ADF would defend Fairfax County’s school board “free of charge” against any court challenge if it instead adopted the ADF model policy to bar trans students from using the bathrooms of their gender identity.¹¹⁸ The Family Foundation backed this model “developed by our friends at Alliance Defending Freedom,” saying “children deserve to know that they can walk into a bathroom and not be confronted by someone of the opposite sex.”¹¹⁹

With 10 of the 12 school board members voting in favor, the gender identity protections were passed despite the angry jeers and threats from ADF and its friends. Weeks later, when the school board adopted a Family Life Education policy that included LGBTQ-affirming language, Concerned Women for America sent out an action alert slamming the “brazen action” and urging members to tell the board to stop “indoctrinating our students as young as twelve or thirteen with a radical

¹¹⁶ <http://www.familyfoundation.org/blog-posts/2015/05/fairfax-school-board-could-vote-to-violate-children-rights>

¹¹⁷ https://youtu.be/L0w7SZl_swo?t=2397

¹¹⁸ <http://www.adfmedia.org/files/FairfaxGIletter.pdf>

¹¹⁹ <http://www.familyfoundation.org/blog-posts/2015/05/fairfax-school-board-could-vote-to-violate-children-rights>



gender ideology.”¹²⁰ The Family Foundation of Virginia followed suit, urging members to flood the meeting and to recruit their pastors to join the effort.¹²¹ And FRC’s Ruse, who frequently attends Fairfax County school board meetings, signed up repeatedly to speak at in the citizen comment period to scold the board over its LGBTQ inclusion.¹²²

Liberty Counsel filed a challenge in the Virginia courts arguing that the transgender non-discrimination policy violated the rights of parents, students, and community members and exceeded the school board’s legal power.¹²³ The case was rejected for lack of standing at both the circuit court and the state Supreme Court.¹²⁴ Staver vowed to continue fighting, warning that any “application of this unlawful policy may result in a new suit.”¹²⁵ And the Daily Signal ran a series of stories highlighting the policy and parents’ opposition.¹²⁶

A GOING CONCERN

As in Arizona, Florida, North Carolina, South Dakota, Ohio, and Virginia, other state anti-LGBTQ groups rely on funding and material support from national groups. By working together, through formal alliances or informal collaboration, the national organizations enable these partner groups to maintain a strong grip on power in state capitals. With voter guides that score legislators on their anti-equality voting records, the state organizations hold considerable sway over what legislation passes and what legislation dies.

¹²⁰ <https://concernedwomen.org/action-alert-fairfax-county-school-board-to-hold-final-vote-to-add-gender-identity-as-a-special-protected-class/>

¹²¹ <http://www.familyfoundation.org/blog-posts/2015/06/change-coming-to-family-life-education-in-fairfax>

¹²² <https://youtu.be/pt5qdp0dHHQ?t=1341>

<https://youtu.be/CEBUZC0Csck?t=1286>

¹²³ <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2016/jan/05/school-board-sued-over-nondiscrimination-policy-ch/>

¹²⁴ <https://www.lc.org/newsroom/details/041317-court-dismisses-fairfax-county-lgbt-case>

¹²⁵ <https://www.washingtonblade.com/2016/09/08/prince-william-schools-nondiscrimination-proposal-sparks-debate/>

¹²⁶ <https://www.dailysignal.com/2015/11/04/challenger-unseats-school-board-member-who-supported-transgender-policy/>

<https://www.dailysignal.com/2016/07/14/as-this-school-district-sets-new-transgender-guidelines-parents-fight-for-transparency/>

<https://www.dailysignal.com/2016/07/20/amid-complaints-from-parents-virginia-school-board-pauses-new-transgender-policy/>

<https://www.dailysignal.com/2017/03/10/my-local-school-board-may-begin-silencing-parents-over-transgender-agenda/>





The alliances also allow them to activate local communities (and members from nearby areas) to attempt to exert a heckler’s veto over action at the county board, city council, or even local school board levels.

The Focus on the Family/Family Policy Alliance [playbook](#) is clear. In conservative states they and their allies fight to enact “pro-family, pro-freedom measures” including policies that discriminate against LGBTQ families. In more progressive states they seek to the “front line of defense” to “stop the crazy stuff” and “radical social experiments” like employment protections for workers, bans on harmful conversion therapy for kids, and public accommodations for transgender citizens. They try to normalize themselves by “finding common ground” on issues like promoting adoption, fighting domestic violence, and opposing youth sexual exploitation and work to make it difficult to paint them as “those crazy right-wing fanatics.” They organize religious leaders and activists in each state to bring a “missionary mindset” to their legislative agenda.

Anonymous donors bankroll this effort through the National Christian Foundation. NCF then sends millions of dollars to groups like ADF, Family Policy Alliance, Eagle Forum, and Concerned Women for America. ADF and the Family Policy Alliance then disburse funds to state anti-LGBTQ groups and Eagle Forum and CWA use their networks of state chapters to help out the cause. And the state and local groups rely on messaging and experts from national organizations like ADF, FRC, and Heritage to make their case to activists and lawmakers. While the results have been mixed at the local level and national outcry over proposals like Arizona’s license to discriminate legislation and North Carolina’s notorious bathroom bill have undermined some of their statewide efforts, their robust funding, motivated membership, scare tactics, and misinformation campaigns have allowed anti-LGBTQ organizations to subvert the will of the increasingly pro-equality majority in most states.

In this case, Tip O’Neill’s famous “all politics is local” mantra does not hold true. It is because of the national anti-LGBTQ infrastructure that the state and local groups have the resources they need to stem the tide of progress toward equality.

