

To: Interested Parties

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Subject: Addressing Common Questions on LGBTQI+ Issues

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In July 2026, the Center for American Progress (CAP) released a [policy platform](#) designed to serve as a foundation for leaders who want to reclaim their footing on LGBTQI+ issues, defuse attacks, and, in so doing, defend civil rights protections for all Americans. The Center for American Progress Action Fund has created a memo to demonstrate how to discuss these issues.

Our experts at the Center for American Progress Action Fund are happy to meet with you to discuss these issues. Please do not hesitate to reach out to [ssignorelli@americanprogress.org](mailto:ssignorelli@americanprogress.org) if we can be helpful.

The CAP plan provides a policy platform that:

- **Affirms Americans' shared values.** We should all be able to agree that everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect; that all Americans should be able to work, access federal services and housing, and enjoy public spaces; and that politicians should not interfere with medical decisions or the health of patients.
- **Holds that everyone should be safe from discrimination and harassment.** Transgender people didn't choose to be transgender, and no one should be bullied or harassed due to their gender identity. Congress should pass nondiscrimination protections that protect everyone from mistreatment based on who they are.
- **Understands that restrictions on sports eligibility may be appropriate based on the level of competition.** Decisions on who should participate in sports should lie with sports associations and other sports governing bodies that know their athletes and the level of play the best, not with politicians.
- **Allows parents to make medical decisions without interference from politicians.** Decisions about if or when minors access transgender medical care should be made by parents—not politicians. Parental consent has always been and should always be required for teens to receive ongoing transgender medical care.
- **Applauds all who serve.** All Americans who are qualified and willing should be able to serve their country, and no one should be excluded from participating in military service or contributing to their community due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

## Talking About LGBTQI+ Issues

Work with your audience and meet them where they are. Position statements should be made with the goal of connection and persuasion, not condemnation. Key messages to keep in mind at all times:

**Inclusive policies benefit everyone.** Defending and strengthening civil rights protections for LGBTQI+ people is a core part of our democratic society.

**LGBTQI+ people are facing an affordability crisis, compounded by discrimination.**

The wage gap for LGBTQI+ households is 85 cents on the dollar—that gap is even higher for LGBTQI+ people of color, transgender people, and disabled LGBTQI+ people. More than one-third of LGBTQI+ people experience discrimination in their day-to-day lives.

**Republicans are using LGBTQI+ issues as a wedge.** Backlash to progress is a sign that we need to keep up the momentum, not concede. Leaders must protect the civil rights victories and ensure that all people can live safely in our communities.

**Expand the conversation.** Don't avoid the issue, which lets others define it. When you pivot to broad topics like affordability or community safety, be sure to include statements on how this impacts LGBTQI+ people. And personalize the issues—talk about gay and transgender people you know and what they contribute to their communities.

DO NOT: Repeat misinformation or controversial language from bad-faith questions. Maintain clear and accurate language in your statements.

**Non-Discrimination:**

DO: Identify proactive and affirmative positions, rather than only focusing on stopping harms. While Trump has explicitly attacked LGBTQI+ rights, it is more important to highlight how Democrats will improve lives and hold Republicans accountable.

Proposed Answer: LGBTQI+ people have the same rights to safety, dignity, and respect as every other American. The reality is that we have strong legislation ready that would achieve these goals in the Equality Act.

DO: Talk about how the affordability crisis also impacts LGBTQI+ communities and how discrimination further harms employment opportunities, safety, and economic stability.

Proposed Answer: LGBTQI+ people are experiencing the same affordability crisis as every other American.

DO: Emphasize the need for greater oversight and accountability to address the roll-backs in protections.

Proposed Answer: The current administration has made no secret of its attacks on LGBTQI+ people. Moving forward, [Congress/elected officials] should use their authority to hold the government accountable. Our system of checks and balances is designed for this—we can demand accountability and use these lessons to craft more robust inclusive policies.

DO NOT: Advocate for a position that may conflict with existing protective laws in your state or which contradicts federal policy (ex. In [Minnesota](#), court precedent and law **prevent exclusion** of trans adults *and* youth in athletics).

**Youth:**

DO: Emphasize the importance of family support for LGBTQI+ youth and the role of parents in the decision-making process for transgender youth who receive gender-affirming care. Talk about yourself as a parent or other friends and neighbors in similar positions.

Proposed Answer: I trust parents to know what is best for their kids, and I believe that medicine should be based on evidenced-based treatment. Transgender young people and their parents should make decisions about their health care, not politicians.

DO: Support policies which protect young people from harm or exclusion caused by misunderstandings and discrimination. Bullying and discrimination in educational spaces has a negative impact on all youth, and LGBTQI+ youth deserve a safe learning environment too.

Proposed Answer: Federal law is clear: All school policies should focus on safety and inclusion of every student. We need to protect LGBTQI+ students from discrimination and invest in strong civil rights enforcement.

### *On Sports Participation:*

DO: Respond to questions about trans athletes while emphasizing shared values around participation and safety. When doing so, avoid repeating language which frames this issue just as “boys/men in girls’/womens’ sports without further nuance. Trans participation is not the most serious issue in women's sports—for example [in 2024](#) less than 0.002% of NCAA athletes were transgender. People can expand the conversation to improved funding, civil rights, and other policy solutions.

Proposed Answer: These decisions should be made by athletic associations who know more about sports science, specific safety issues in their sport, and gender equity. I support participation policies which balance access and fairness, but politicians shouldn't make those calls.

Proposed Answer: There are serious issues in women's sports. I believe we should focus on big picture solutions like pay and resource equity so that women athletes receive the resources and recognition they deserve. In 2024, there were fewer than a dozen trans NCAA athletes in the entire country.

DO: Link your own background and family experiences to protecting young people from harm.

### **Health Care:**

DO: Focus on the right of every American to high quality, affordable care without discrimination. Specific policy areas include nondiscrimination in insurance coverage (private and public), improved cultural competency for providers, and enforcing nondiscrimination laws in health care settings.

Proposed Answer: Our health care system is under attack. Americans are balancing rising costs and restrictions on their access to all types of care. LGBTQI+ people are especially vulnerable to negative health outcomes, and we need to protect their right to care without political interference.

DO: Focus on the right of patients, their families, and providers to make all health care decisions.

Proposed Answer: Politicians should not have the power to dictate treatment. Only patients, their families, and providers should make decisions about medical care. Our role is to make sure that health care remains accessible and grounded in strong, evidenced-based medicine.

### **Military Service:**

DO: Focus on the importance of objective qualifications and capacity in military service; not ideological judgments of a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. If applicable, talk about your military service and what qualities were important to you as a member of the military.

Proposed Answer: I am grateful to every American who answers the call to serve our nation's military. Transgender service members have a long history of capable and courageous service. Bans and forced separation on military service for transgender individuals harms our national security and military-readiness.

DO: Center benefits for veterans and service members who have made sacrifices for our country. The administration has cut federal funding for key VA services and the reductions-in-force across the federal government have disproportionately impacted veterans.

Proposed Answer: We owe all of our veterans not only our thanks, but also our support. They have served our country and we should honor their sacrifices by keeping the promises made: ensuring they have homes, health care, and jobs when they return to civilian life. This is true for transgender veterans, just as it is for everyone.

### **Expand the Conversation:**

DO: Discuss the economic realities of LGBTQI+ people in relation to all Americans. Drawing on the shared experiences of the country during this affordability crisis can build empathy and understanding across communities.

Proposed Answer (Housing): The housing crisis impacts everyone—people are struggling to pay rent and buy a home. LGBTQI+ Americans are seeing the same housing crisis as all Americans: fewer own their own home/have the ability to buy their first home and are shut out from building wealth.

Proposed Answer (Income): More than half of LGBTQI+ people earned less than \$60,000 in 2024. And the wage gap is 85 cents on the dollar for LGBTQI+ households. The affordability crisis is hitting every American family, that's why we need solutions to raise wages and lower costs.

Proposed Answer (Discrimination & Jobs): Many LGBTQI+ people have to make choices about where to work to avoid discrimination and about 1 in 4 LGBTQI+ adults experienced discrimination in the workplace. Everyone should be able to get a well-paying job and feel safe in their work environment.

Proposed Answer (Families and Kids): LGBTQI+ people spend a lot of time caring for their partners, kids, families, and friends. Our workplace policies should reflect this and support all families.

**Side note....Specific Cases or Examples:**

DO: Respond to questions about state laws, specific policies, or court decisions *only if you know the details*. In some states, non-discrimination laws permit participation in athletics and/or protect from discrimination in public accommodations, health insurance coverage, employment, housing, etc. Highlight the importance of early actors in creating progressive momentum.

If you don't know: I am not familiar with that specific policy. But I support civil rights protections for LGBTQI+ people. Progress is not always simple but it is still worth fighting for.

If you know: Name the policy and be clear about why you support it, while referencing shared values (i.e. equality, safety, dignity, civil rights)

*Below are a selection of CAP resources that contain useful data points on LGBTQI+ experiences from CAP's LGBTQI+ Community Survey and policy analysis.*

[Recorded Event: Serving All Who Served: State Leadership for Transgender Veterans](#) 11/10/25

[The State of Disabled LGBTQI+ People in 2024](#) 7/15/25

[LGBTQI+ People are Underinsured and Experience Health Insurance Discrimination in Key Areas](#) 6/30/25

[The Intersex Community Faced Significant Barriers and Challenges in 2024](#) 6/25/25

[LGBTQI+ People are Working, Healing and Caring in a Country Without Guaranteed Paid Leave](#) 6/20/25

[The 2024 LGBTQI+ Wage Gap](#) 6/17/25

[New Survey Shows Abortion Bans' Unique and Chilling Impact on LGBTQI+ People](#) 5/8/25

[By Cutting Support for Trans Health Care, the VA saves merely pennies per veteran](#) 3/19/25

[The LGBTQI+ Community Reported High Rates of Discrimination in 2024](#) 3/12/2025

[The Equality Act: The patriotic approach to fundamental fairness for LGBTQ Americans](#) 6/9/21

[Fact Sheet: What you need to know about the Equality Act](#) 3/15/21