



TRANScending Barriers:

**Navigating Local Government from
School Boards to State Legislature**



○○○ HI! MEET YOUR PRESENTER

MYRTLE LEMON-TODD

they/he

@sharkylemon

good digital for folks who can't digital good

I believe in the importance of Queer Joy. Solely because of the body I inhabit, I am constantly advocating for justice for both myself and my community – my identity is an unintentional political statement.

At a time when we are being forcibly de-transitioned, facing various medical exclusions, and working against our own legislature, I want to do something. To make a difference. To use my skills and expertise to better the future for both myself and my community.



What to Expect

we only have an hour oops

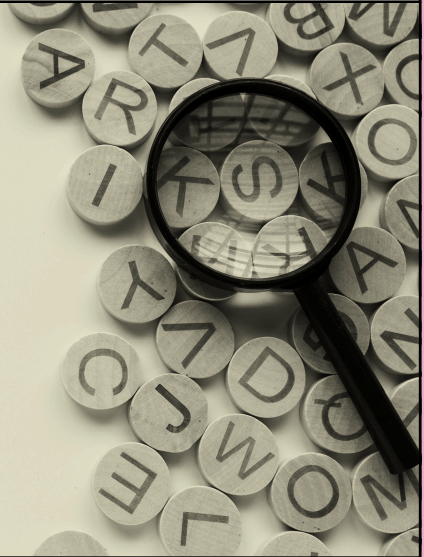
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|------------|-----------------|------------|---------------------|
| 01. | Terminology | 05. | Organizing Basics |
| 02. | State of the US | 06. | Help! |
| 03. | State of MN | 07. | Further Exploration |
| 04. | Getting Started | 08. | Citations |





Terminology

ask questions PLEASE!





TRANS

an individual who DOES NOT identify with the gender they were assigned at birth

CIS

an individual who DOES identify with the gender they were assigned at birth

QUEER

overarching term for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community - a reclaimed slur

GENDER

a societal construct of cultural identification

TRANSPHOBIA

hatred or fear of trans individuals - cisgender LGBTQ people may have transphobic feelings that can make it harder for them to support trans people as they also fight for equality and acceptance.



ooo



State of the US and MN

for trans rights



State of the US → spoiler alert, it's bad

TARGETTED ATTACKS

There are different categories we track attacks on Trans lives:

SOCIAL -> Creating a life that is congruent with gender identity. ie coming out at home, work and/or social settings and use of a chosen name & pronouns.

sustaining hostile and transphobic policies, not allowing pronouns in email signatures/name badges, etc

LEGAL -> The process of updating legal documents such as a birth certificate, drivers license, etc.

"biological" legal definitions by state-level, restricting birth certificate changes, restriction of drivers liscence changing, lack of access to DMV

MEDICAL -> A long-term series of medical interventions that utilizes hormonal treatment (HRT) and/or surgical interventions

banning GAC, limited access to care by age, refusal to cover GAC by insurance





State of the US → spoiler alert, it's bad

ANTI-TRANS LEGISLATION

595 bills introduced across 43 states. 42 have been implemented.

TRANS REFUGEES

47% of trans individuals have thought about moving because their state passed laws that target transgender people - 5% have already moved.

MENTAL HEALTH

80% of adult & 60% of 16/17 year olds who were out or perceived as transgender at school experienced harassment



State of mn → it's better...but not great

TRANS REFUGE LAW

The Trans Refuge law prevents out-of-state laws from interfering in the practice of gender-affirming health care - 2023

ANTI TRANS PANIC DEFENSE BAN

Establishes that using force against another based on a belief about the other person's sexuality is not an authorized use of force - 2024

CODIFYING PROTECTIONS FOR GAC

Health plans require coverage of gender-affirming care -2024



Minnesota has 3 out Trans Legislators - Representatives Finke, Curran, and Kozlowski.





→ **this is why we're here**

Despite all this adversity, nearly all trans folks (94%) reported that they were either “a lot more satisfied” (79%) or “a little more satisfied” (15%) with their life post-transition.

So lets get to the work, shall we?





Getting Started

getting informed, getting involved





HOW TO GET CONNECTED

Check your worksheets for a QR code to find out who your city coucilor and state rep is!

SET UP GOOGLE ALERTS

I personally have them for all of our 2STGNC+ legislators and "trans", "trans rights". They'll email you a summary of news every day!

FOLLOW TRANS PEOPLE ONLINE

From organizations to legislators to activists.

NEWSLETTERS

These will tell you about happenings central to your ward and city - like initiatives from the community, local events, and ward-level changes. Other community-led newsletters (like mine!) can tell you about local events and initiatives as well.

GET TO KNOW YOUR REPS

Ever level has weekly or monthly hours during the session that community can attend! Find out from emails or social - they'll let you know. You can also send emails to ask about conerns and set up 1:1 appointments.

COME TO EVENTS LIKE THESE!

Being in community is the best way to stay informed.





SHOW UP & SHOW OUT

When you see rallies, major events, and legislative calls to action, heed the call.





"We used to accept this crap of: 'We're not worthy,' and 'We shouldn't exist'...We've got to revolt, and we've got to reclaim who [we] are and let these people realize, before they came along, we were honored and worshiped and appreciated and adored.

If this world is going to get its act together, they have to support and put in the front to lead this revolution the people who are the most oppressed, which is my Black transgender community."

MISS MAJOR





Organizing Basics

let's advocate!





The Basics

we'll apply all of these strategies in an example soon

CENTRALIZE AN ISSUE

After forming your core organizing team (make sure it's not just you!) start setting key goals.

LEVEL -> Are you supporting something at the state, city, or county level?

Research online for information on your issue

DEMANDS -> What do you want to change? How can you envision "fixing" this issue?

ie School hires trans-specific cultural training for all staff

EVENTS -> Are there any meetings, bill readings, discussions, central to the core of your issue?

*This is where you want the community to *show up**





Awareness & Engagement

IRL -> Talk to your close family, your friends, neighbors. Identify and reach out to important figures central to your issue - get to know them!

DIGITAL -> Follow activists that speak out on trans rights - not just national. Understand who leads local organizations and follow **them**.

IRL -> Workshops and Panels: Events with experts to where individuals fill out surveys pertaining to your issue. Reach out to local activists and leaders to lead discussions. Create petitions!

DIGITAL -> Social and Email: Share or create infographics, videos, articles that you make or that others make. Both Canva and Substack have great free programs.



Direct Advocacy

- Attend and/or coordinate meetings and **present findings from community engagement** efforts.
- Provide concrete **recommendations for policy changes** - yes, even you.
- **Schedule meetings** with local political and community to discuss the importance of trans rights protections.
- **Prepare fact sheets** and personal stories to leave with legislators.
- **Coordinate with visibility dates** and celebrate them loudly (like TDOV).



HELP → engaging with opposition

Often times when we testify, protest, rally, or generally show up in support of Trans individuals, opposition shows up.

INVISIBLE -> Don't engage if you can. ESPECIALLY if you a trans. Pretend they are invisible and get to a safe space as soon as possible.

RECORD -> Some folks may disagree with me, but you can and should wear a body cam if you are trans at a rally and/or protest. All legal proceedings are recorded (even school boards!) so you will absolutely be protected there. If someone continues you antagonize you and/or you can't leave, start recording.

PREVENTATIVE -> By working with queer- and trans-competent security organization, you can put protections in place. Though not advised, you can also call and notify police of your rally to keep them appraised of the situation. Know your area and community as to what would be safest.

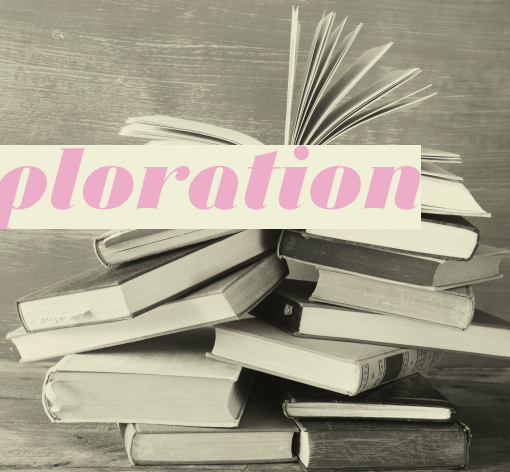


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Further Exploration

let's get nerdy





BOOKS -> Trans Liberation: Beyond Pink or Blue

Leslie Feinberg

Gender Outlaws: The Next Generation,

Kate Bornstein and S. Bear Bergman

Gender Queer

Maia Kobabe

Transgender History

Susan Stryker

In Transit

D. Anderson

VIDS ->

Tangerine - A groundbreaking film shot entirely on an iPhone, "Tangerine" follows a day in the life of two trans women sex workers in Los Angeles, capturing their struggles and resilience.

MAJOR! - This film chronicles the life and activism of Miss Major Griffin-Gracy, a veteran of the Stonewall Riots and a long-time advocate for trans women of color.

PODCASTS -> TransLash Podcast with Imara Jones

Interviews with activists, scholars, and community leaders who are working to advance trans rights and visibility.

Gender Reveal

Personal stories to discussions about policy, healthcare, and social justice.

One From the Vaults

Each episode delves into a different historical figure or event, offering a rich and often overlooked perspective on trans history.

take a pic of this page





Citations

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The Trevor Project. (2023). 2023 U.S. national survey on the mental health of LGBTQ young people. https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2023/assets/static/05_TREVOR05_2023survey.pdf

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1299.

US Trans Survey. (2024, February 22). US Trans Survey. <https://ustranssurvey.org/>





Thanks!



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