

*Approved by AHA Council, May 2021*

The American Historical Association opposes in the strongest possible terms efforts to restrict the teaching of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) history in elementary, middle, and high schools. Recently, legislators in [Arizona](#), [Idaho](#), and [Tennessee](#) have introduced measures that would ban teaching LGBTQ+ history, or require students to opt in. These proposals complement existing anti-LGBTQ+ curriculum laws (sometimes called “no promo homo” laws) [in at least six states](#). We forcefully reject the implication in both proposed and existing legislation — one used in the recent past to perpetuate homophobia and homophobic public policies — that the teaching of LGBTQ+ history in any way threatens children. Indeed, we assert the contrary: that the failure to teach LGBTQ+ history distorts the historical record, harms LGBTQ+ students specifically, and prevents all students from receiving a complete education.

As historians, we recognize that we are currently in the midst of a moral panic that is coalescing around [myriad efforts to exclude transgender people in particular from public and private life](#), including bans on participation in school sports and government interference in personal medical decisions. As part of this backlash, we are once again witnessing broader anti-LGBTQ+ legislative measures that not only attack LGBTQ+ people, but normalize discrimination against LGBTQ+ people by erasing their histories from the national understanding of the past.

Research demonstrates the benefits of LGBTQ+-inclusive curriculum for young people, especially LGBTQ+ students. [According to the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network](#) (GLSEN), an LGBTQ+ student advocacy organization, schools with an LGBTQ+-inclusive curriculum report that LGBTQ+ students are less likely to feel victimized due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression; have higher GPAs; and are more likely to go on to attend college. The inclusion of LGBTQ+ history in school curricula is key to ensuring these students’ safety and education.

GLSEN also reports that LGBTQ+-inclusive curricula help create a more supportive school environment and greater acceptance by non-LGBTQ+ students. Moreover, the failure to include LGBTQ+ history in the curriculum provides students with a false picture of the past. Not only have LGBTQ+ people made great contributions to both United States and world history, attention to LGBTQ+ issues helps students understand the history of the family; of civil rights and politics; of race, gender, and class; and of religion, to name just a few examples. Students who attend schools that include LGBTQ+ history will therefore not only be better informed citizens but will also be better prepared to engage with the complexities of everyday life.

The American Historical Association therefore opposes restrictions on the teaching of LGBTQ+ history and promotes the repeal of existing limits. In addition, we are strongly in favor of expanding access to LGBTQ+-inclusive history curricula and greater protections for history teachers who include LGBTQ+ history in their classrooms, such as those included in the [Equality Act currently being considered by the US Senate](#).