

OSINT REPORT: TRUMP'S TRANSPHOBIA

Historical Record Through March 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Trump was not historically associated with transphobia until he took office and began courting major anti-LGBTQ+ organizations, shifting from prior expressions of indifference or even support for transgender people. Since 2017, Trump has progressively escalated anti-transgender rhetoric and policy, with his second term (2025–2026) marking a historically unprecedented targeting of transgender people across federal institutions. Ten percent of all Trump executive orders signed in his second term have targeted LGBTQ Americans and other marginalized groups.

PRE-OFFICE (2015–2016)

Trump's name was hardly synonymous with homophobia or transphobia 25 years ago, even 10 years ago; he had branded himself as agnostic on social issues, if not liberal, and expressed indifference or even support for transgender people. Trump knew transgender contestants in his beauty pageants and was friends with Jenner before taking office. As early as May 2016, candidate Trump vowed to rescind federal directives that protect transgender people in schools and healthcare.

FIRST TERM (2017–2021)

Military Ban (July 2017)

On July 26, 2017, Trump announced through a series of tweets that transgender individuals would no longer be allowed to serve in the U.S. military, though the Pentagon was caught "off guard" by the announcement, suggesting the move was not recommended by military leaders. Trump announced the ban, claiming it would affect 15,000 currently serving troops, though Vice President Mike Pence advocated behind closed doors for the removal of healthcare benefits for transgender service members. By March 2019, as courts ruled against the ban, the Pentagon laid out a policy allowing those currently serving to continue with hormone treatments and gender transition if they had specific plans in place.

Title IX Rescission

Trump rescinded Title IX protections for transgender students, and a Department of Education internal memo revealed guidelines to dismiss complaints about bathroom access filed by transgender students.

Institutional Actions

GLAAD began the Trump Accountability Project on the first day of Trump's administration when staff noticed all LGBTQ mention was removed from the White House website.

SECOND TERM: ESCALATION (2025–MARCH 2026)

Executive Orders & Proclamations

On Trump's first day in office in January 2025, he issued an executive order to "restore biological truth" to the federal government by eliminating the word "gender" and replacing it with "sex," stating the federal government would only recognize people based on their sex at the time of conception based on their "reproductive cell."

Gender-Affirming Care Rhetoric

In 2024, Trump claimed that children were being given gender-affirming surgery at school, repeating the claim multiple times throughout his campaign despite no evidence that any school in the United States had ever provided gender-affirming surgery to a student; he repeated such claims in his 2026 State of the Union Address. The New York Times documented that Trump's directives and speeches regularly use terms such as "maiming" or "junk science" to describe gender-affirming care and the research that supports it.

Campaign Language (2024–2025)

The Trump campaign spent \$65 million on anti-transgender campaign ads claiming "Kamala supports taxpayer funded sex changes for prisoners and illegal aliens. Kamala is for they/them. President Trump is for you," though by law the government must provide medical care to prisoners and immigrant detainees, a policy enacted under Trump's own administration. Trump vowed to crack down on "transgender insanity" and pledged to "revoke every Biden policy promoting the disfigurement of our youth" at his first 2024 campaign rally, also calling for executive orders to cut federal funding for any school pushing "transgender insanity."

"Transgender for Everybody" Rhetoric

The Trump Accountability Tracker documents at least 470 policies and statements targeting LGBTQ Americans, including 50 instances of Trump mentioning "transgender for everybody" since taking office in January 2025, a phrase deployed to diminish support of transgender people with broad criticism of political opponents in unrelated speeches, interviews, and topics.

Federal Bathroom Ban (January 2025)

Trump's executive order expanded restrictions by saying the military would "neither allow males to use or share sleeping, changing, or bathing facilities designated for females, nor allow females to use or share sleeping, changing, or bathing facilities designated for males." Following the mandate, the Department of Defense and other agencies barred transgender employees from using the restroom that matches their gender identity.

Military Service Removal (2025)

The Pentagon announced it would begin removing at least 1,000 openly transgender troops from the military, with others given 30 days to self-identify as transgender, while the Defense Department warned it would review medical records to identify those who do not come forward. Trump's January 2025 executive order disqualifies all people from military service if they have a current or historical diagnosis of gender dysphoria, or if they "exhibit symptoms consistent with" gender dysphoria, effectively banning transgender, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming people from serving.

Federal Employee Healthcare

Trump directed the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to limit access to care coverage for federal employees' families by requiring carriers to exclude "coverage for pediatric transgender surgeries or hormone treatments" in the 2026 Plan Year.

Prisons & Detention (2025–2026)

Beginning in 2026, the Federal Bureau of Prisons adopted new policies based on those in Florida that mandated conversion therapy for transgender inmates, requiring transgender inmates to have their hair cut short, be taken off hormone medication, and instead be put into psychiatric therapy and given psychiatric drugs. Transgender men in ICE custody under the Trump administration have reportedly been specifically subjected to forced labor programs, with justifications given by guards including "If you wanna be a man, I'll treat you like a man," and those who refused faced punishments including beatings and solitary confinement, with many also reporting severe sexual abuse.

Passport & Travel Document Denials

Following an order from President Trump, the State Department implemented a policy of denying transgender people, including nonbinary people, accurate passports with sex markers congruent with their gender identity. On November 6, 2025, the Supreme Court allowed the Trump Administration to continue prohibiting transgender and nonbinary Americans from access to appropriate and accurate gender markers on travel documents, including passports, in a 6-3 decision strongly rebuked by dissenting Justices Ketanji Brown Jackson, Elena Kagan, and Sonia Sotomayor.

State-Level Coordinated Action

On February 25, 2026, many people flagged as potentially transgender in the government system started receiving letters from the Kansas government stating their ID and driver's licenses would become invalid starting February 26, 2026, with no grace period allocated.

Olympics Pressure (March 2026)

In March 2026, the Trump administration successfully pressured the International Olympic Committee into banning trans women and intersex athletes from competing in female events at the 2028 Summer Olympics and future Olympic games, with all potential Olympic athletes required to undergo a one-time SRY screening before being permitted to compete in the female category.

MOTIVATION & ANALYSIS

GLAAD said it is difficult to determine what changed for Trump between 2015 and now that made him take such a hard line on transgender issues, though analysts suggest it is simple politics — that transgender people are a tool Trump uses to rile GOP hardliners. According to one source quoted in reporting, "I think that him making transphobia a centerpiece of his presidency is mostly about pandering to his base and the result of whomever was in his ear last at any given moment, and it just so happens that the vast majority of the people who are in his ear are anti-trans."

DOCUMENTED IMPACT

The Trump administration's actions targeting transgender people have led some transgender Americans to seek refuge abroad. As of publication, the Trump Accountability Tracker has counted 367 attacks against LGBTQ+ Americans by both of Trump's administrations combined. Markets have lost \$4 trillion since Trump took office, yet he has signed five executive orders specifically targeting transgender people's identities, health care, education, and military service.

SOURCES

Primary tracking sources: GLAAD Trump Accountability Tracker, National LGBTQ+ Bar Association Anti-Trans Litigation Tracker, ACLU LGBTQ & HIV Project, Advocates for Trans Equality, Centers for Disease Control, Department of Defense, Federal Bureau of Prisons.