

BEFORE IT REPEATS — Simple Read Edition

What Is Happening in the United States and Why It Matters

A shorter version of the full report, written in plain language

March 2026

Starwater Research / Starwater LLC

With full context and power for truth, while seeking freedom and safety of all — may respect prevail.

About this version: This is a shorter, simpler version of the full report *Before It Repeats*. It uses plain language so more people can read and share it. It is also written for easy translation into other languages. For the complete report with all sources and evidence, visit **starwater.xyz**.

This document discusses suicide, harm by governments, family rejection, detention, and targeting of communities. Some of this may be hard to read. You can stop, take a break, and come back. The information will still be here.

A note on terminology: This work uses “LGBTQIA2S+” (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, Two-Spirit, and more) at key moments to include everyone affected. In most of the text, “LGBTQ+” is used for readability. Both mean the same broad community.

Who Wrote This and Why

I am writing this from inside one of the communities being targeted. I put this together because no single news story, no single organization, and no single expert has assembled the full picture in one place.

This report shows: what is happening right now in the United States, who built the systems doing it, how much money pays for it, which patterns from history it follows, and what people who faced these patterns before did about it.

This is Release 1 — a public briefing. A longer, more detailed Release 2 is being written. This research was done with AI assistance. I directed every question, made every decision, and take responsibility for every conclusion.

You are trusted. You deserve to see the full picture and decide what to do with it.

There is a window of time to act. It is still open. This document is about what you can see through it — and why it matters that you look now.

What This Report Claims

This report makes one main argument: **what is happening in the United States is not a collection of separate policy fights. It is a coordinated attack on targeted communities — transgender people, immigrants, journalists, racial minorities, disabled people, workers, and others — built on systems that have been funded and designed over decades.**

These attacks on different groups are covered as separate news stories. Trans rights on one page. Immigration on another. Press freedom on a third. But the money is the same, the organizations are the same, and the legal tools are the same. This report makes that visible.

How This Report Handles Claims

Every claim in this report falls into one of five categories:

- **“Documents show...”** = This is a proven fact from public records.
- **“The pattern across institutions...”** = Multiple facts pointing in the same direction.
- **“This suggests...”** = A logical conclusion drawn from facts. The reasoning is shown.
- **“The parallel to [historical case]...”** = A comparison to history. Not saying things are the same — saying the pattern is similar.
- **“If current trends continue...”** = A projection based on evidence. Not a prediction.

When this report says something is a fact, it is documented. When it draws a conclusion, it says so. When it makes a comparison, it names the limits.

What History Teaches Us

Two cases from history show why this matters — and why there is reason for hope.

A Law That Lasted 123 Years

In 1871, Germany made a law called Paragraph 175 that criminalized gay men. The Nazi regime made it much worse in 1935. When the Nazis fell in 1945, the law did not fall with them. Democratic Germany kept using the Nazi version for 24 more years. About 50,000 men were convicted under a democracy using a law built by a dictatorship.

The total: 123 years. 140,000 convictions. The law survived an empire, a republic, a dictatorship, and a reunification.

The lesson: Once a legal system is built to classify and target a group of people, that system keeps running even after the people who built it are gone. It takes organized effort to tear it down.

But it was torn down. In 2002 and 2017, Germany pardoned all men convicted under this law and created a compensation fund. It took 132 years. It took people who refused to accept that the law was permanent.¹

When People Fought Back and Won

Between 1981 and 1996, the United States government let people die of AIDS through deliberate inaction. President Reagan did not say the word “AIDS” publicly until 1987. By then, over 20,000 Americans had died.

ACT UP was founded in 1987. Within three years, it had 140 chapters worldwide. Its strategy combined street protests with deep knowledge of how government systems work. Members learned how drug trials work, how the FDA approves medicines, and how to change those systems from inside.

¹Paragraph 175, German Criminal Code (1871-1994). 140,000 convictions documented. See Whisnant, *Queer Identities and Politics in Germany* (2016). Full sourcing in main report endnote 9.

The results were real: the FDA changed its drug approval process. Congress passed the Ryan White CARE Act, providing billions in funding. New medicines turned AIDS from a death sentence into something people could live with.

The lesson: Communities that learn how the systems threatening them actually work gain power that moral arguments alone cannot. Loud protest combined with expert knowledge is the pattern that produces results.²

What Is Happening Now

Changing Definitions to Remove People from Legal Protection

On January 20, 2025, Executive Order 14168 changed how the federal government defines sex. This single change spread through every federal system: employment, prisons, health-care, passports, visas, Social Security, and more. In federal prisons, the government now forces transgender inmates to stop hormone treatment and undergo psychiatric intervention — practices that major medical organizations call conversion therapy — while a federal court order says they cannot do this.³

Kansas passed a law (SB 244) that voided about 1,700 driver’s licenses overnight, with no grace period. The state sent invalidation letters, but not all affected people had received them by the time the law took effect. Without valid IDs, they also cannot vote.

Ignoring the Law

The government is creating a gap between what the law says and what it does. The Supreme Court ruled in 2020 that firing someone for being LGBTQIA2S+ is illegal. The agency that enforces this law refuses to enforce it. Courts have issued over 210 orders that the government has violated or ignored.⁴

The government is also targeting immigrants for removal at rates over 100 times higher than normal, using technical paperwork differences as the excuse.

Building a Surveillance System

In February 2025, thirty-one days after the executive order redefining sex, the Department of Homeland Security removed gender identity from the list of categories protected against intelligence targeting. After public reporting, they restored protections for sexual orientation — but not for gender identity. As a matter of current federal policy, DHS can conduct intelligence activities targeting someone for being transgender but not for being gay.⁵

The government has connected many databases into one system. Social Security records, tax data, personnel files, health records, and veterans’ data are now searchable together. Sepa-

²ACT UP history: see Schulman, *Let the Record Show* (2021); France, *How to Survive a Plague* (2016). Full sourcing in main report endnotes 10 and 27.

³Executive Order 14168 (January 20, 2025). Full text: <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/executive-order-14168-defending-women-from-gender-ideology-extremism-and-restoring>. BOP Program Statement 5260.01 (February 19, 2026). *Kingdom v. Trump* injunction (Judge Lamberth). Kansas SB 244 (2026). Full sourcing in main report endnotes 1, 38.

⁴Deacon and Litman, “Legalistic Noncompliance,” *Duke Law Journal* (2026): 210 violated court orders. Full sourcing in main report endnote 28.

⁵DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis: removed gender identity from protected surveillance categories (February 2025). Sexual orientation restored March 11, 2025; gender identity remains omitted. Snopes fact-check (TRUE): <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/dhs-surveillance-lgbtq/>. See also Erin in the Morning: <https://www.erininthemorning.com/p/dhs-now-allows-for-surveillance-based>. Full sourcing in main report endnote 54.

rately, a whistleblower says someone copied a database with Social Security numbers for over 500 million people onto a personal device.⁶

The FBI's searches of Americans' private communications increased 35% in one year. A law that was meant for foreign spying is now being used for domestic enforcement. This law expires April 20, 2026.

The government also created a global tracking code — "SWS25" — to flag suspected transgender visa applicants worldwide.⁷

How the System Works Without Giving Orders

This may be the most important finding in the research.

42 hospitals stopped providing gender-affirming care in states where that care is still legal. Over 1,000 nonprofit organizations changed their mission statements — half of them had zero government funding. 65% of Fortune 500 companies left a corporate equality program.

No one told them to do this. They did it because they feared what might happen if they did not. This is called a "chilling effect" — when fear causes people and organizations to change their behavior before they are even told to. This makes the system very hard to challenge, because the harm happens through self-censorship, not through direct orders.⁸

Even in states with shield laws, major hospitals chose to shut down care. NYU Langone and Mount Sinai in New York both stopped their trans care programs — in a state with a shield law protecting that care. At least 42 hospitals across the country have ended care even where it remains legal. Shield laws are necessary, but they are not enough when institutions decide to comply with federal pressure anyway.

Idaho HB 752: From Civil to Criminal Penalties

Kansas showed how to use civil bounties to target transgender people. Idaho went further. Idaho HB 752 passed the House with felony criminal penalties — up to 5 years in prison for a second offense of using the restroom that matches someone's gender identity. There is no "duty to depart" requirement. Police can arrest someone on presence alone. Even the Idaho police and sheriffs' associations opposed this escalation. This is what escalation looks like: from Kansas's civil bounty system to criminal prison time.

Erasing the Research and the Evidence

The federal government is eliminating both healthcare and the evidence base at the same time. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) terminated over 300 research grants on transgender health care — more than \$350 million redirected to studies about "regret." Across federal agencies, 360 data collections were scrubbed of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) information. The government is trying to make the research disappear.

The same thing is happening in healthcare. The Department of Health and Human Services stripped gender-affirming care from the Essential Health Benefits — the core services all health insurance must cover. The federal employee health benefit ban affects over 10 million people and mandates "faith-based counseling" for those with gender dysphoria — another name for conversion therapy. The federal government is eliminating both the care and the study of it.

⁶DOGE database: WIRED, ProPublica (2026). NUMIDENT breach: Washington Post (March 10, 2026). Full sourcing in main report endnote 39.

⁷SWS25 tracking code: State Department guidance, February 2025. Reported by Erin in the Morning (<https://www.erininthemorning.com>), immigration attorneys. Full sourcing in main report endnote 35.

⁸Chilling effect data: CNBC, ProPublica, HRC Corporate Equality Index (<https://www.hrc.org/resources/corporate-equality-index>). Full sourcing in main report endnote 16.

The Human Cost

A study of over 61,000 transgender young people found that anti-trans laws caused a 7% to 72% increase in suicide attempts among transgender youth, depending on the type of law. Government data shows that 25.9% of transgender high school students attempted suicide in the past year.⁹

85% of transgender Americans say the political environment has hurt their mental health. 55% are hiding who they are. 84% have made major life changes since November 2024 — moving, changing jobs, or getting documents updated while they still can.

On June 17, 2025, the government shut down the LGBTQIA2S+ crisis line at the national suicide hotline. This service was getting about 60,000 calls per month. The government removed the support for the people whose crisis it is creating.

Crisis support still exists — the Trevor Project (1-866-488-7386), Trans Lifeline (1-877-565-8860), and Crisis Text Line (text START to 741741) remain available.

The people affected are not a small group. About 200 million Americans — roughly 58% of the population — are directly touched by these systems, through healthcare cuts, immigration enforcement, benefit reductions, document changes, or surveillance.¹⁰

Who Pays for This

Five main money networks fund the organizations behind these policies. Together, they have directed billions of dollars:¹¹

- Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) writes model laws, gets states to pass them, defends them in court, and trains the judges who rule on them. The same money funds every step.
- Project 2025 is a published plan by the Heritage Foundation. It is now 53% implemented. 70% of the current cabinet has ties to it.
- The same donors fund both tax cuts for the wealthy and attacks on targeted communities. A single law — the One Big Beautiful Bill Act — combined permanent tax cuts with healthcare bans, food benefit cuts of \$187 billion, and immigration enforcement.

This is also international. American organizations operate in over 100 countries. Russian government sources are the largest funder of anti-LGBTQ movements in Europe.¹²

The Courts

The Supreme Court has enabled much of this. In 2025, it applied the weakest legal protection to transgender healthcare bans. It allowed the government to enforce policies that deny transgender people accurate passports. In March 2026, it ruled 6-3 that schools must tell parents when a student comes out as transgender — a decision made without full arguments or

⁹Suicide data: Raifman et al., *Nature Human Behaviour* (2024), n=61,000+. CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2023. 988 LGBTQ+ service data: KFF (2025). Full sourcing in main report endnote 34.

¹⁰Population impact: 200M/58% overlap-adjusted estimate using Census, CMS, Gallup, Williams Institute, and USCIS data. Full methodology in main report endnote 40 and at <https://starwater.xyz>.

¹¹Financial data: IRS 990 filings via ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer (<https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/>). ADF: \$110.7M revenue. Leo network: \$504M across 9 organizations. Full sourcing in main report endnotes 18-21.

¹²International coordination: Heritage-Danube Institute agreement. Russian anti-LGBTQ funding: \$186.7M (2009-2018). European Parliamentary Forum, “Tip of the Iceberg” (2021). Full sourcing in main report endnotes 22-23.

review.¹³

All six conservative justices are connected to the Federalist Society. The network that funded their appointments spent over \$500 million. The same organizations that write the laws targeting communities also trained and funded the judges who rule on those laws.

At the lower court level, the government is losing 70-80% of its cases. But the Supreme Court keeps overriding those protections.

How Bad Is It — Honestly

Seven independent organizations that measure democracy all agree: the United States is experiencing a decline in democracy that is faster and deeper than anything recorded in its history.¹⁴

Freedom House gave the United States a score of 93 in 2021. It dropped to 84 in 2024. In 2026, it dropped again to 81 out of 100 — the lowest score in 54 years. The US now ranks alongside South Africa. The V-Dem Index, which ranks democracy globally, downgraded the United States from a “Liberal Democracy” to an “Electoral Democracy” — the first time in over 50 years. The US dropped from 20th place to 51st place. That is a 24% loss of score in a single year. V-Dem found that freedom of expression in the US is at its lowest level since the end of World War II. For the first time in 20 years, autocracies outnumber democracies in the world — 91 to 88.

In 2025, the government passed or advanced 740+ anti-LGBTQ bills. That is a 668% increase since 2021. Of those, 125 became law. The Lemkin Institute — named after the person who created the legal definition of genocide — issued its third warning about the United States on March 11, 2026. It said the US is in the early to middle stages of a process that could lead to genocide against transgender people.

Seven allied countries — Germany, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Ireland, Portugal, and Canada — have issued travel warnings telling their transgender citizens to be careful in the United States.

But there is reason for hope. 52% of democratic declines in history have been reversed. 73% in the last three decades. Reversal is the more likely outcome. South Korea went from a military emergency to convicting its leader in 14 months. Brazil’s former president was convicted and banned. ACT UP transformed the FDA in three years. Paragraph 175 was repealed after 123 years. Apartheid fell when five forces pushed at the same time.

These are not just inspiring stories. They are documented evidence that organized people have reversed these patterns before.

What you have just read is hard. It is the work of understanding a threat. What comes next is the work of seeing how people are fighting back.

¹³*United States v. Skrametti* (2025): <https://www.scotusblog.com/case-files/cases/united-states-v-skrametti/>. *Orr v. Trump* (2025). *Mirabelli v. Bonta* (March 2, 2026). Full sourcing in main report endnote 17.

¹⁴Seven democracy indices: V-Dem (<https://v-dem.net/>), Freedom House (<https://freedomhouse.org/country/united-states>), EIU, Bright Line Watch (<https://brightlinewatch.org/>), Century Foundation (<https://tcf.org/>), Protect Democracy, International IDEA. Lemkin Institute RFA #3 (March 11, 2026): <https://www.lemkininstitute.com/red-flag-alerts/red-flag-alert-anti-trans-genocide-in-the-usa-%233>. Travel advisories: 7 nations + UK. Full sourcing in main report endnotes 24, 32, 37.

What Is Working and What You Can Do

What Is Working Now

Up to 18 states plus Washington DC have passed laws protecting people from out-of-state legal attacks. Legal organizations are fighting in the courts and winning at the lower levels. Some states have fully replaced lost federal funding. Florida's organizers stopped every anti-LGBTQIA2S+ bill in the 2025 legislative session.¹⁵

Oregon expanded its shield law specifically to resist federal subpoenas. Montana courts blocked nearly the entire anti-trans agenda before it could become law.

At the national level, the European Parliament voted 340 to 141 for "full recognition of trans women as women." Some anti-trans Democrats were blown out in North Carolina primaries — losses of 69-27, 64-36, and 70-22. These are not close races. Voters rejected them decisively.

But there are also new threats. Colorado certified two anti-trans ballot measures for November 2026, organized by an evangelical group with backing from the Catholic archdiocese. Four states total are pushing anti-trans ballot measures. Republicans also attached an amendment to a museum bill that bans the Smithsonian from depicting trans women as female in any exhibition. This is cultural erasure through federal control of institutions.

Erin Reed, a national trans journalist, issued a "Do Not Travel" warning for transgender people — a national designation. Kansas, Florida, and Texas rank at the highest state risk.

The Real Cost to the Military

The trans military ban is presented as being about cost. The actual numbers: trans military service cost about \$650 per person per year in healthcare — negligible compared to overall military healthcare spending. The ban itself will cost \$18 billion in operational investment to replace the military skills that are being lost, plus \$1 billion more in direct replacement costs. The ban affects 15,000 service members, 73% of them senior enlisted — the most experienced soldiers. The government is paying an enormous price to remove experienced people from the military in the name of saving money.

What You Can Do

Get your documents in order. Update birth certificates, get medical records (complete copies, stored in separate places), and start the apostille process if you may need international documents. Do this now, not later.

Protect your healthcare. Request your complete medical records from every provider. Find out about providers in states with protection laws. Ask about 90-day prescription supplies.

Protect your digital life. Use Signal for private conversations. Use a VPN. Remove yourself from data broker websites.

Build community. Know who you can call in an emergency. Have contact information that does not depend on one app or device. If you have children, make sure custody documents are current.

Have a plan. Whether you plan to stay and fight or leave, preparation is power. Every historical case shows: the people who did best were the ones who prepared while they still could.

Stay informed. Trans Legislation Tracker (translegislation.com) monitors every bill. Erin in the Morning (erininthemorning.com) reports daily. The ACLU tracks all lawsuits. For legal help:

¹⁵Shield laws: up to 18 states + DC. Movement Advancement Project tracking: <https://www.lgbtmap.org/>. Full sourcing in main report endnote 29.

Lambda Legal, Transgender Law Center, GLAD Law, Sylvia Rivera Law Project. For crisis support: The Trevor Project (LGBTQ+ youth), PFLAG (families). Updates at starwater.xyz.

What History Tells Us About Changing This

Every case in this research confirms one finding: **change requires pressure from multiple directions at the same time.** Legal resistance alone does not work. Protests alone do not work. Economic pressure alone does not work. All of them together — at the same time — is what produces change.

The same system that makes institutions comply out of fear can be reversed. When enough people push back at once, the cost of targeting becomes higher than the cost of stopping.

My Position

You now have what I set out to provide: the picture, assembled in one place, in plain language.

My position — stated here because honesty requires it — is that the evidence supports action, that the time to act is real but not unlimited, and that every person in every targeted community deserves to make their decisions with open eyes.

The window is still open. What you do with what you have seen through it is yours to decide.

With full context and power for truth, while seeking freedom and safety of all — may respect prevail.

About This Version

This is the Simple Read Edition of *Before It Repeats*. The full report (~14,000 words, 40 endnotes, complete sourcing) is available at starwater.xyz. That version contains the complete historical analysis, detailed financial documentation, full legal citations, and the comprehensive source archive.

This version was written at a 7th-8th grade reading level using simple sentence structures optimized for machine translation. If you are reading this in a translated version, please know that the translation was done by computer software and may contain errors. The full report in English is the authoritative version.

This is political speech, civic analysis, and inquiry into matters of urgent public concern. It is protected under the First Amendment. It is offered freely as a public service.

Sources

This simplified version draws from the full report's 40 endnotes and approximately 4,350 source URLs. Key sources referenced above:

Release 2 — the complete work with expanded analysis — is in development.

For the full report, all sources, and updates: starwater.xyz