



# THE KIDS ARE **NOT** ALRIGHT

The Effects of Anti-LGBTQ+ Legislation on  
Young Georgians

*A project dedicated to the resilient trans  
and queer youths of the state of Georgia*



**“My trans agenda is not to turn cis children into trans, but it's to turn trans children into adults.”**

**- NiiLee Cyrus (she/her)**



**This project was led and funded by the Youth Advocacy Team of the Equality Foundation of Georgia.**

**All survey data is confidential and the property of the Equality Foundation of Georgia. For questions about the survey, please email [survey@georgiaequality.org](mailto:survey@georgiaequality.org)**

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# Introduction

In recent years, there has been a rise in anti-LGBTQ+ bills at the Georgia State Capitol. In response, young people throughout the state of Georgia have been coming to the state Capitol pleading with legislators to focus on issues affecting them, such as low literacy scores, housing, inaccessibility to quality healthcare, gun violence, and more. Disturbingly, they have been left unheard. Instead, Georgia legislators are using LGBTQ+ youth as political pawns.

At the national level, several groups and organizations have surveyed young people and the results have shown that there is a devastating correlation between a decline in the mental health of LGBTQ+ youth and the passage of these anti-LGBTQ laws. In 2023, Georgia Equality launched a statewide survey asking LGBTQ+ Georgian youth about their mental health, their concerns and effects of these bills on their mental health, and the results are devastating.

Two years of constant attacks at the Golden Dome have left LGBTQ+ youth, particularly trans youth in the state, feeling hopeless and unprotected. Georgia is one of only three states without a state civil rights law. These bills targeting people based on age, gender identity, and sexual orientation further marginalize an already vulnerable group of Georgians. Youths from the following sixty six (66) counties in Georgia responded to the survey:

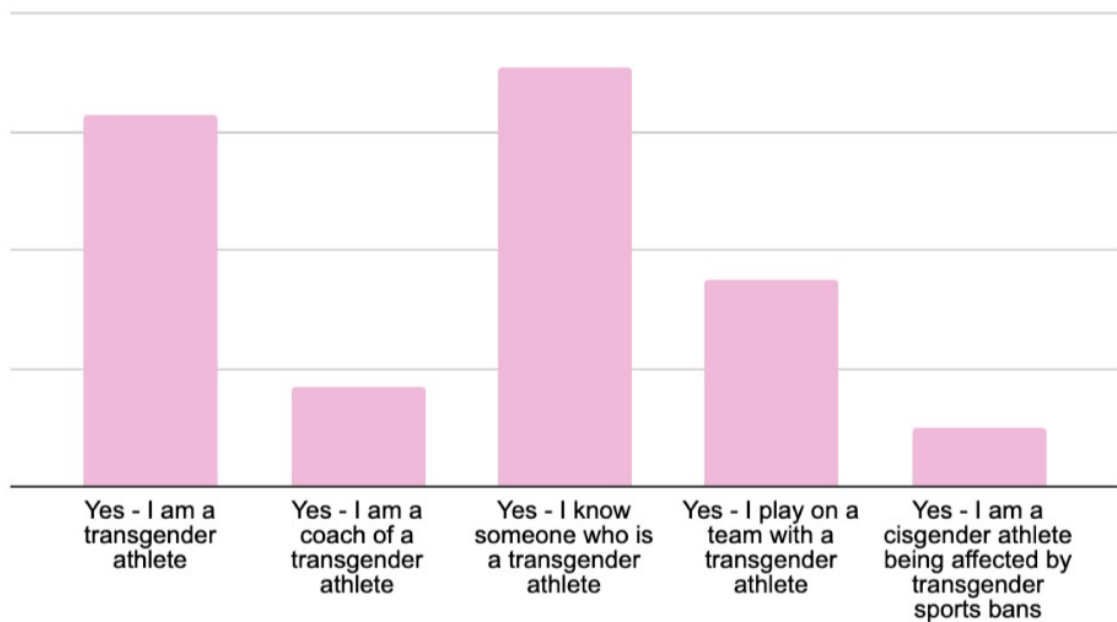
Atkinson, Bacon, Baker, Baldwin, Barrow, Bartow, Berrien, Bibb, Bleckley, Brooks, Bryan, Bullock, Burke, Calhoun, Camden, Campbell, Candler, Carroll, Catoosa, Chatham, Chattooga, Cherokee, Clarke, Clay, Clayton, Clinch, Cobb, Columbia, Coweta, Decatur, DeKalb, Dooly, Dougherty, Elbert, Fayette, Floyd, Forsyth, Fulton, Gilmer, Glascock, Glynn, Gwinnett, Habersham, Hall, Hancock, Haralson, Henry, Houston, Jefferson, Monroe, Murray, Muscogee, Newton, Paulding, Polk, Quitman, Randolph, Richmond, Schley, Spalding, Tift, Twiggs, Ware, Warren, Webster, Whitfield.

The survey addressed many relevant concerns, but this report will focus on four key issues: (1) participation in sports, (2) use of bathrooms and locker rooms, (3) access to medical care and (4) emotional safety.

# Participation in Sports

In the section of the survey addressing transgender students in sports, there were a total of 270 responses. 46% of respondents reported not being affected by sports bans. Of the remaining respondents, 32.1% are transgender athletes, 36.2% know someone who is a transgender athlete, 17.9% play on a team with a transgender athlete, and 8.7% coach a transgender athlete.

Have you been affected by transgender sports bans?

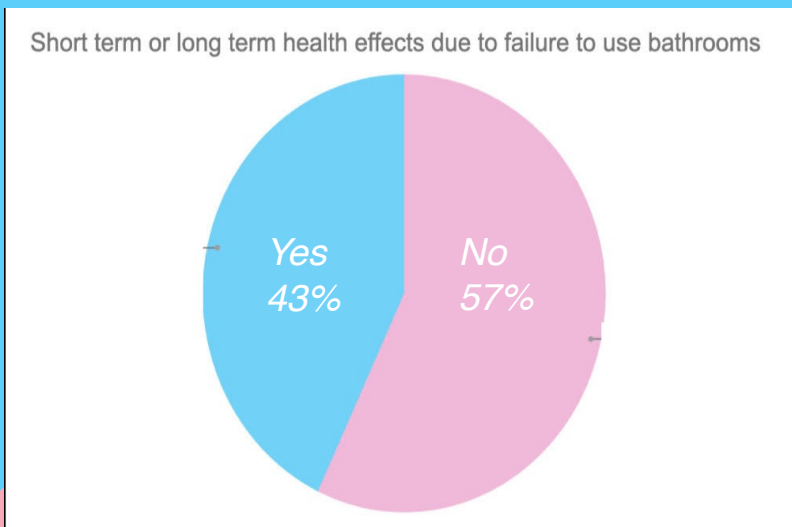
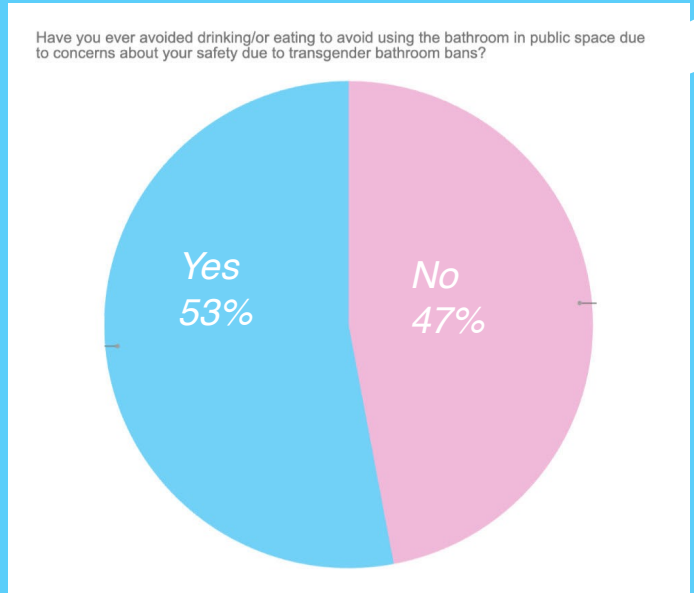


*54% of the survey respondents are directly or indirectly affected by laws that prevent transgender students from participating in athletic programming.*

Note: Of the cisgender survey respondents who said they are affected by sports bans, 40.6% report being harassed, having been examined, or being asked to undergo medical examination because others assumed they were transgender based solely on their appearance.

# Use of Bathroom and Other Facilities

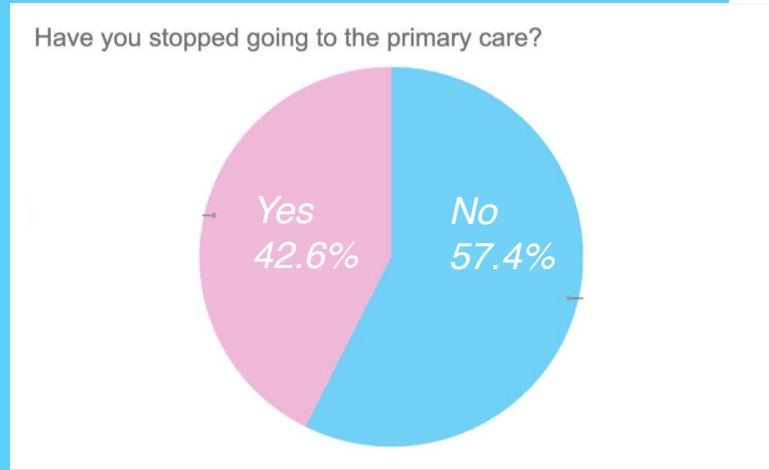
53% of young people surveyed said they have avoided using the bathroom over safety concerns. This is very alarming considering that medical studies have shown that failing to urinate or failing to drink adequate amounts of water throughout the day may have adverse health consequences (Popkin et al, 2010).



Even more alarming than the failure to attend to their physiological needs, 43% of the young people who participated in the survey reported that they already have health issues due to avoidance of public restrooms out of fear of harassment

# Access to Medical Care

The survey results paint a very distressing picture of the state of healthcare access for LGBTQ+ youth. An analysis of the data shows that the rampant homophobia and transphobia within the medical system, which is undoubtedly exacerbated by the recent wave of political meddling in the patient-provider relationship, has resulted in medical avoidance in our young people. In fact, 42.6% of survey respondents report having discontinued seeking primary care.

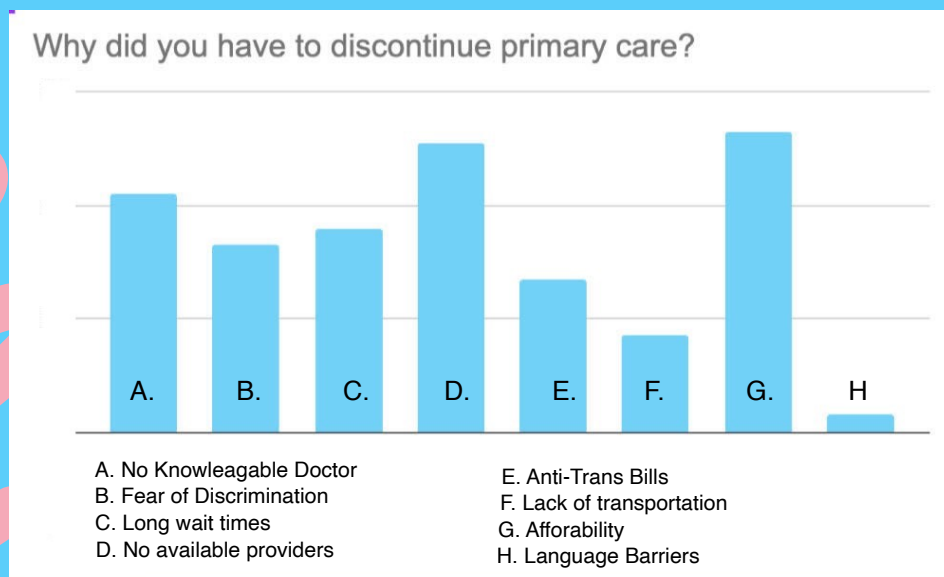


## Why are young people not seeking medical care?

44% of survey respondents reported that fear of being outed by healthcare professionals has kept them from seeking medical care. 45.5% said fear of discrimination caused their medical avoidance.

But that is not all, the respondents listed several reasons for discontinuing care that have been a source of grave concern for healthcare advocates over the last decade; most of which have not been addressed by state legislators. Some of the other reasons listed for medical avoidance are: 1. Affordability of care 2. Lack of Availability of qualified professionals 3. Lack of knowledgeable healthcare practitioners 4. Long wait times and 5. Fear of discrimination.

**It is important to note that over 10% of the respondents stated that fear of legal repercussions as a result of gender-affirming care bans has caused them to avoid seeking medical care altogether.**



# Safety

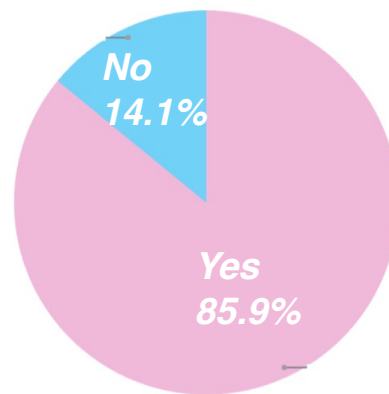
When it comes to feeling safe, the numbers are shocking. Young people are not feeling safe at home, at school and in public. The recent attacks on transgender youth have left young Georgians without any safe spaces and are forcing them to hide who they are in order to stay safe.



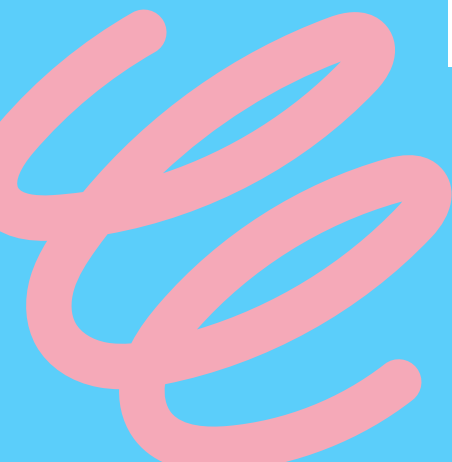
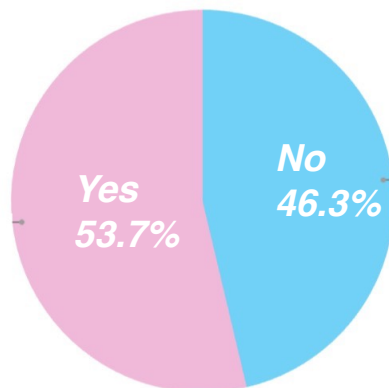
## Verbal and Physical Harassment and violence

Young Georgians are subjected to violence both physical and verbal at an alarming rate which has undoubtedly contributed to them feeling unsafe.

Have you ever experienced verbal harassment and/or offensive language directed towards you because of your LGBTQ+ identity?



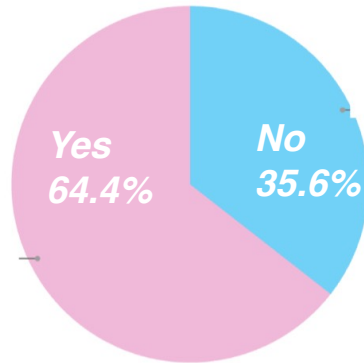
Have you ever experienced physical harassment and/or violence because of your LGBTQ+ identity?



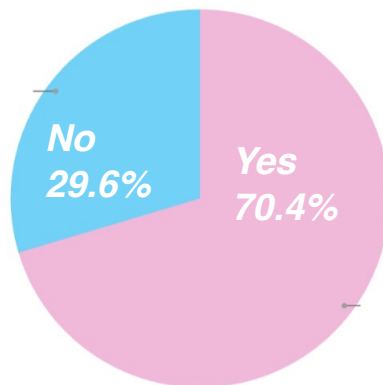
## Concealing LGBTQ+ Identity for safety reasons

An overwhelming majority of survey respondents have stated that fear related to their safety has prevented that from being out at home, at school and in public spaces.

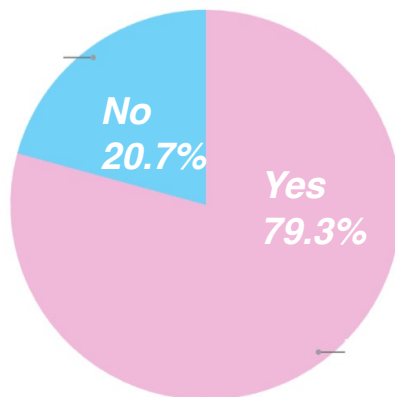
Have you ever felt that you needed to conceal your LGBTQ+ identity from family and/or caretakers for safety reasons (emotional safety, physical safety, etc.)?



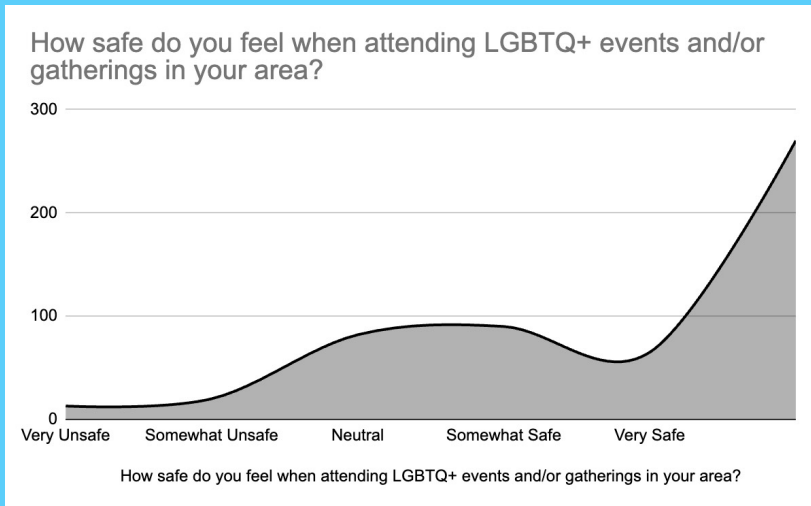
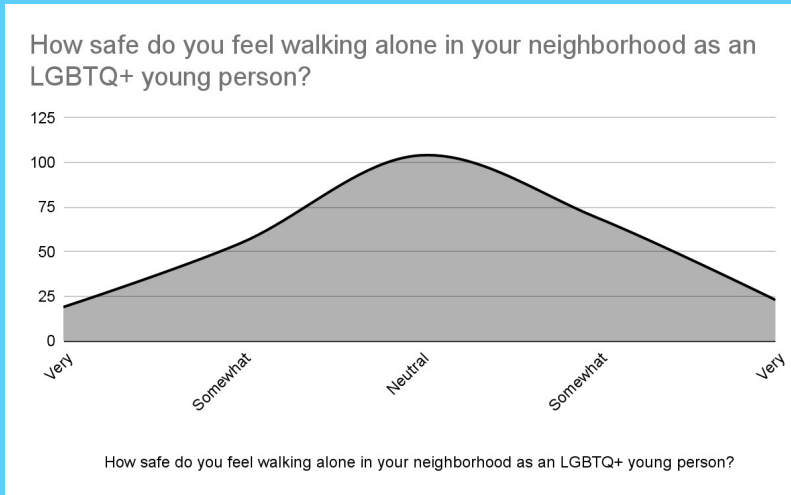
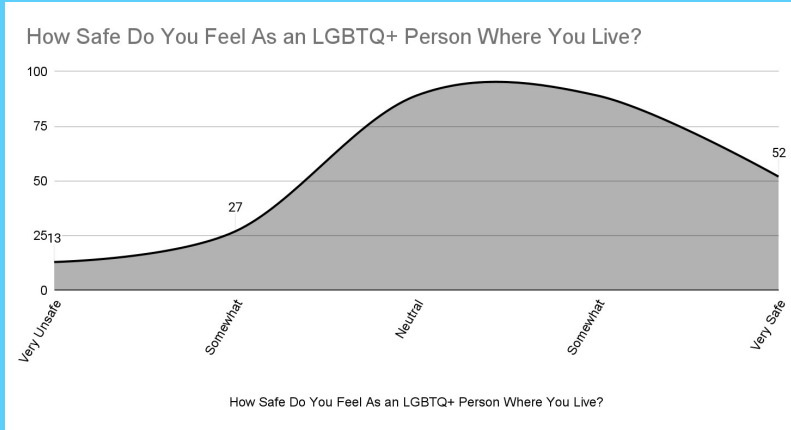
Have you ever felt that you needed to conceal your LGBTQ+ identity at school for safety reasons?



Have you ever felt that you needed to conceal your LGBTQ+ identity in your community (in public, etc.) for safety reasons?



# Feeling of safety in public spaces



# Methodology

Data was collected through a web-based survey platform between December 8, 2023 and March 6, 2024. A sample of individuals 13 to 26 who are residents of the state of Georgia were recruited through Georgia Equality's social media pages and at in-person events. Respondents were defined as being LGBTQ+ if they identified with a sexual orientation other than straight/ heterosexual, a gender identity other than cisgender, or both. Qualified respondents completed a secure online questionnaire that included a maximum of 158 questions.

Although 784 individuals began the survey, 514 were excluded for various reasons, i.e. they failed the study's validity check - they were not honest in their responses, and/or were identified as mischievous based on written responses; they did not complete all the screening questions; they did not meet recruitment requirements etc... This resulted in a final eligible sample of 270 LGBTQ respondents of those young people ages 13-26 residing in 66 counties through the state of Georgia.



# Methodology (continued)

## Breakdown by Age:

13-16: 8.5%, 16-18: 17%, 18-21: 40%, 22-26: 34.4%

## Breakdown by Race:

55.2% White

25.6% Black

5.9% Latine

4.1% Asian

1.9% Biracial or Multiracial

## Breakdown by County:

Atkinson (0.4%), Bacon (1.4%), Baker (10%), Baldwin (1.1%), Barrow (0.3%), Bartow (0.3%), Berrien (2.2%), Bibb (1.4%), Bleckley (0.3%), Brooks (0.3%), Bryan (0.3%), Bulloch (0.3%), Burke (0.3%), Calhoun (1.4%), Camden (0.7%), Campbell (0.7%), Candler (0.3%), Carroll (1.1%), Catoosa (1.1%), Chatham (1.8%), Chattooga (0.3%), Cherokee (2.2%), Clarke (0.3%), Clay (1.1%), Clayton (1.1%), Clinch (0.3%), Cobb (7.7%), Columbia (0.3%), Coweta (0.3%), Decatur (0.3%), DeKalb (5.1%), Dooly (0.3%), Dougherty (0.3%), Elbert (0.7%), Fayette (0.3%), Floyd (3.7%), Forsyth (0.7%), Fulton (20.1%), Gilmer, Glascock (0.3%), Glynn (0.7%), Gwinnett (4.8%), Habersham, Hall (1.8%), Hancock (0.3%), Haralson (0.7%), Henry (1.1%), Houston (0.3%), Jefferson (0.3%), Monroe (0.7%), Murray (0.7%), Muscogee (0.3%), Newton (0.7%), Paulding (0.3%), Polk (0.3%), Quitman (1.4%), Randolph (1.4%), Richmond (1.8%), Schley (0.3%), Spalding (0.3%), Tift (0.3%), Twiggs (0.3%), Ware (0.3%), Warren (0.3%), Webster (1.1%), Whitfield (0.3%).

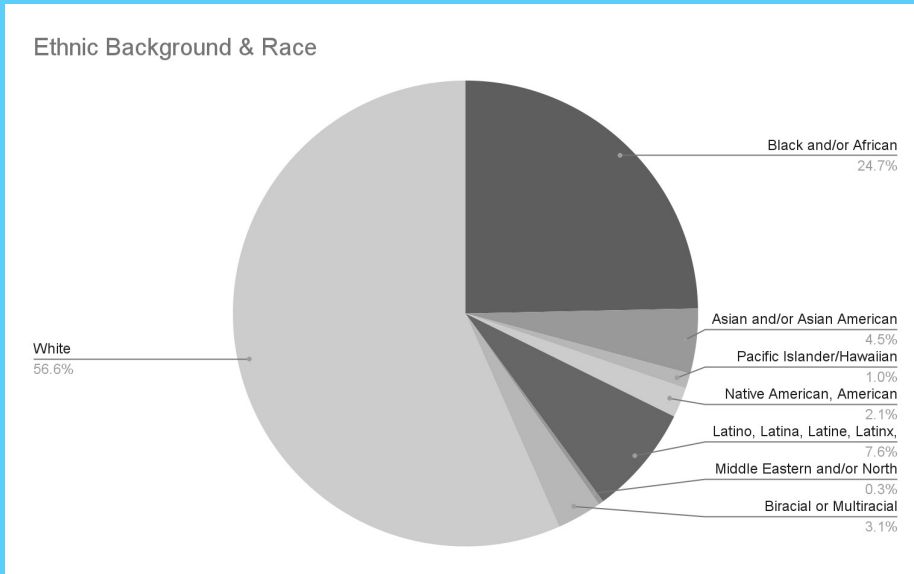
## Breakdown by Gender Identity:

Transgender Woman (MtF) - 29.7%, Transgender Man (FtM)- 33.65, Trans Masc - 3.9%, Trans Femme - 4.1%, Non Binary - 12.2%; Bigender- 4.9%, Gender Non Conforming - 3.5%; Genderfluid - 3.8%, Genderqueer - 3.6%, Agender - 1.9%, Intersex - 1.4%, Questioning: 2%; Cisgender - 0.9%, Male - 0.8%, Female - 0.6%; Cis - 0.3%; Cis women - 0.2%, Demi girl - 0.2%, No labels - 0.2%

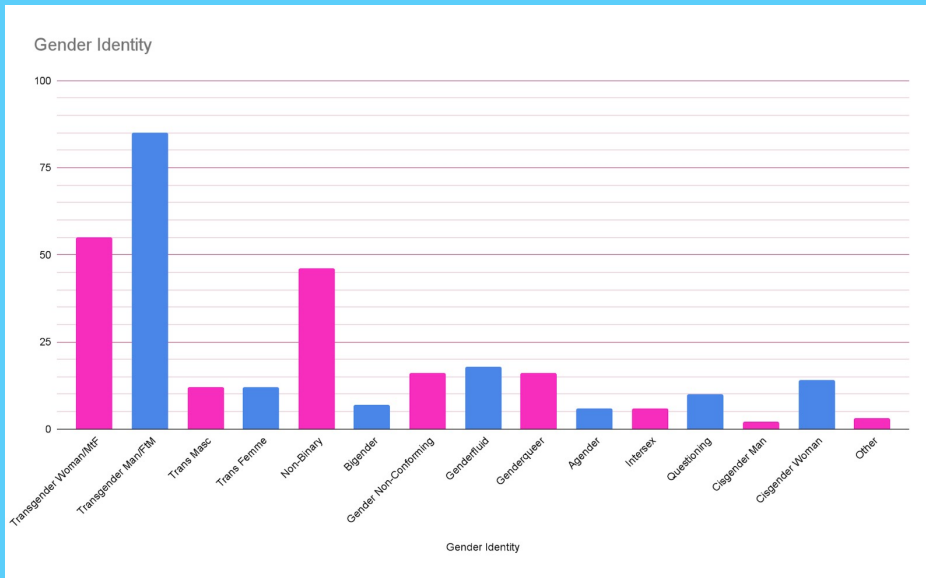


# Demographical Data

## RACE

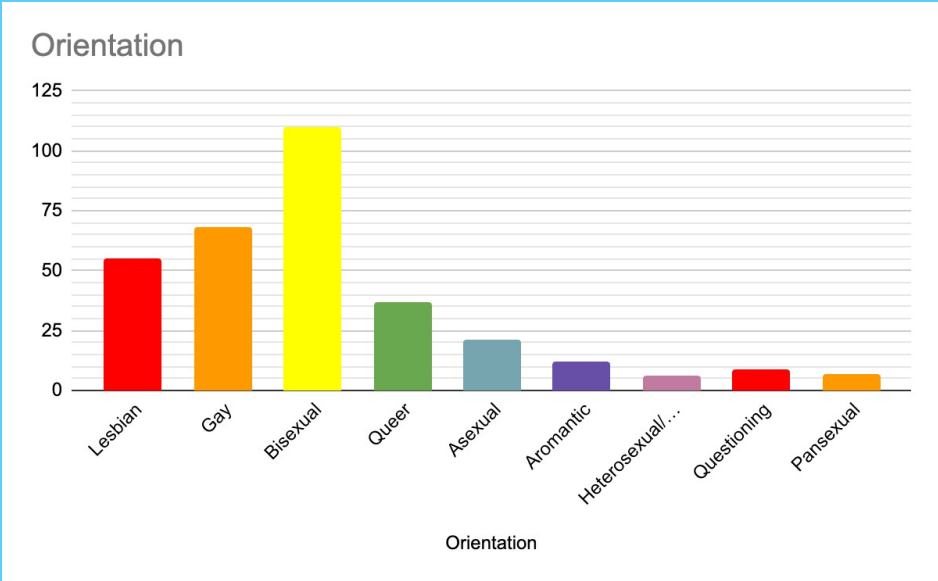


## Gender Identity



# Methodology

## SEXUAL ORIENTATION



# Conclusion

This data has shown how there is a lot of work to do in Georgia and these policies being pushed by the Georgia legislature certainly do not help. These bills have had real and harmful consequences on LGBTQ+ youth and young adults' feelings of safety and belonging, which in turn have negatively impacted their overall mental and physical health.

In the survey, young LGBTQ+ Georgians shared that there are many issues affecting their livelihoods such as youth homelessness and shelter access, access to a safe learning environment, access to quality healthcare, gainful employment, an end to police brutality, and so much more that are not being addressed by the Georgia legislature.

These continued legislative attacks create an environment that heightens levels of anxiety/depression among young people (Trevor Project, 2022). The same survey by the Trevor Project has shown increased rates of suicidal ideation and completion. When we create affirming spaces and support parents, families, and communities of LGBTQ+ young people, we cultivate a space for all young people to thrive and grow into healthy and happy adults.

The survey does not only tell us that these anti-LGBTQ+ bills are actively causing harm to LGBTQ+ youth, it also tells us that there is work to be done beyond of legislative advocacy to ensure that young Georgians feel safe and hopeful about the future.

While legislative advocacy has proven itself to be a useful tool in countering harmful rhetoric about LGBTQ+ youth in the state Capitol, it has done very little to address the real concerns that young Georgians have about safety and wellness. This survey calls us to do more than respond to legislative attacks; it identifies a need to support and advance bills and initiatives that will also address the concerns that survey respondents identified around housing, mental health, healthcare access, job security etc...

Moving forward, policymakers, healthcare providers, educators, and advocates alike must prioritize the voices and needs of LGBTQ+ youth, especially those holding marginalized identities.

**Through concerted and focused efforts to dismantle systemic barriers, we can work towards a future where LGBTQ youth and young adults have equal access to the care and support they need to thrive. This research serves as a call to action to prioritize the well-being and rights of LGBTQ+ youth and to ensure that they are no longer overlooked in our advocacy.**

## References

- Popkin, B. M., D'Anci, K. E., & Rosenberg, I. H. (2010). Water, hydration, and health. *Nutrition reviews*, 68(8), 439-458.

- The Trevor Project. (2022) 2022 National survey on LGBTQ youth mental health Georgia.



## Acknowledgements:

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**Georgia  
Equality**

