

# Far-right Texas attorney general attempts to compile list of transgender residents

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Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton has requested that the state Department of Public Safety provide a list of people who have changed their gender on Texas driver's licenses. No plausibly legitimate reason for this ominous and menacing request has been given. Considering the record of Paxton, Governor Greg Abbott and the Texas Republican Party, it is clear that there is every reason to suspect the worst.

Paxton's request comes to light as the Texas political establishment, which has aligned itself with the January 6 coup attempt and with the most violently reactionary sections of the American political establishment, lurches further and further to the right. The attacks on transgender people—who are vilified as child abusers and “groomers”—are part of the campaign with which the far-right is attempting to mobilize backward social prejudices and undermine democratic consciousness.

Last February, Abbott directed the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services to investigate gender-transitioning health care as child abuse. The targets included the parents of such children, as well as any medical professionals involved. While Abbott's directive was initially blocked by a judge, the Texas Supreme Court overturned that injunction.

These threats to criminally prosecute are not toothless: medical licenses can be revoked, children can be separated from their parents and, if convicted, people can be sent to prison. The prospect of criminal prosecution will be sufficient in itself to discourage many families from seeking evaluation and treatment. That, of course, is its purpose.

In 2021, Abbott signed a bill passed by the state legislature banning transgender students from participating in gendered sports teams different from the gender listed on their birth certificates. The bill was presented as a measure for “protecting girls.”

The legislature has come close to passing a law

requiring that people use restrooms based on their gender as listed on their birth certificates. Thus far it has not passed in part because of opposition from the state's tourism industry.

In the current session of the Texas legislature, House Bill 643 would amend the Texas Business and Commerce Code so that venues hosting drag shows would be considered sexually oriented businesses and would be subject to the same laws used to regulate strip clubs. Among other things, sexually oriented businesses are required to pay a fee of five dollars per customer to the state and must maintain records of every customer entry. Additionally, no one under the age of 18 is allowed to patronize such businesses.

At this point, no information on driver's licenses has been handed over to the attorney general, though only because of a bureaucratic consideration. Over 16,000 instances of gender change requests were found, and the DPS determined that the records would have to be searched manually to determine the reason for the changes.

The effort to compile lists of people to be targeted for persecution has the most sinister implications and historical resonances. The Nazis learned the identity of Jews by using ordinary records created in the normal course of events by a modern state. This included census records, tax returns, synagogue records, and other routine public records. In the cases of Jews who had converted to Christianity, parish records of churches were gathered and scrutinized.

There is no innocent explanation for the attorney general's request for this information and it should be taken as yet another serious warning of the depth of the political crisis and the repressive measures that the American far-right is actively preparing. The increasingly fascist Republican Party works tirelessly to whip its adherents into a homicidal frenzy.

These forces, exemplified by figures such as Paxton and Abbott, are truly capable of anything. Detention camps already exist in Texas, currently filled with refugees and immigrants rounded up by militarized border patrol agents and ICE squads. Notwithstanding the lying claims of the far-right to be concerned with the moral welfare of children, the children in the camps are deliberately subjected to abuse by separating them from their parents and housing them in cages.

Paxton is a financial swindler and legal provocateur who has been under indictment for securities fraud since 2015. Earlier this week he announced that he is suing the US Department of Health and Human Services on behalf of the state of Texas for supposedly ceding American sovereignty to the World Health Organization.

At issue is a rule that he claims “grants the WHO the authority to determine and define what a ‘public health emergency’ is.” Aligning the attorney general’s office with the most vicious pro-virus measures as well as anti-China prejudice, Paxton claimed that “the continued existence of this regulation is even more disconcerting when considering the WHO’s reliance and close ties to our geopolitical enemy, China, which was on full display during the Covid-19 pandemic.”

The far right has been advancing its causes on other fronts. The Texas Republicans have made abortion illegal in virtually all cases. Abortions past six weeks are banned except for medical emergencies in which the life of the mother is at stake. The six-week cutoff comes before most women know that they are pregnant. There is no exception for cases of rape or incest. While Republicans claim they are interested in saving the lives of babies, they provide no assistance to children after they have been born.

The unchecked rise of the far right and their increasingly vicious campaigns underscore the importance of mobilizing the working class for an offensive against capitalism and the social order from which the far right draws its nourishment and encouragement.



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