

Gender Nation: Attacks of all sorts

By Gwen Smith

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Abstract

Gender Nation is a bi-weekly column by Gwendolyn Ann Smith, the founder of the Transgender Day of Remembrance, reviewing news affecting the trans, intersex, and genderqueer community. Attacks of all sorts In what may set the tone for the 2018 midterm elections, an ad for Illinois candidate for Governor, Jeanne Ives, is targeting transgender people and [...]

Article



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Attacks of all sorts

In what may set the tone for the 2018 midterm elections, an ad for Illinois candidate for Governor, Jeanne Ives, is targeting transgender people and other favorite conservative targets.

The advert, named “Thank you, Bruce Rauner,” criticizes her Democratic opponent, using people who may or may not be actors to thank Governor Rauner for his stance on hot-button issues. The way these issues are presented in the ad is heavily slanted towards conservative viewpoints on immigration, abortion, and transgender public accommodation access.

In the ad, a transgender person is represented by a stocky and deep-voiced person with facial stubble in a short red dress, who says, “Thank you for legislation that lets me use the girl’s bathroom.” It is worth noting that Rauner did sign HB 1785 into law in 2017, allowing for easier birth certification changes for transgender people. HB 1785 did not specifically cite public accommodations for transgender people, such as the ad appears to be claiming.

The ad then includes a woman in a “pussy hat” thanking him for making the state pay for her abortion, and a Caucasian in a black hoodie with his face covered with a bandana, thanking the Governor for, “opposing law enforcement and making Illinois a sanctuary state for illegal Illinois immigrant criminals.” The ad also includes digs against the Chicago School System, against utility rate hikes.

Both Republicans and Democrats spoke out against the advertisement, calling for it to be pulled from the airways. In a statement from Illinois Republican Party Chairman Tim Schneider, he stated, “There is no place in the Illinois Republican Party for rhetoric that attacks our fellow Illinoisans based on their race, gender or humanity,” He not only suggested its removal but suggested that Ives apologize to Illinois residents who were “negatively portrayed in a cowardly attempt to stoke political division.”

Ives is not considered a likely candidate in the race, but in the wake of the 2018 Presidential election, anything is possible. It is worth noting, too, that Illinois Republicans have a holocaust denier and white supremacist, Arthur Jones, running unopposed for a congressional seat.

Trans Student Assaulted

A transgender student at De Anza College in Cupertino, California was assaulted in a student parking lot on the 24th of January. The student, Deejea Smith, was struck in the face and knocked out by their assailant in what area police are calling a hate crime.

“The second he saw me he screamed ‘faggot’ and just punched me in the face and I was knocked out cold,” Smith told KGO-TV in San Francisco. Once Smith regained consciousness, they alerted police.

A police sketch of the suspect has been distributed on campus, and while police have some leads, no suspect has been arrested at this time. The suspect is described as a white male in his late 30s or early 40s, about 5’ 10’’, and about 200 lbs. He is also described as having silver hair.

This is the second attack Smith has faced. A week before the current attack, Smith was struck from behind in the same parking garage, and once again was called a ‘faggot’ by their assailant. They did not initially file a police report on the first attack, only telling a campus advisor. It is unclear if the same person committed both acts of violence.

California hate crime laws are inclusive of gender and sexual orientation, and the state’s law covers actual or perceived gender.

More “Bathroom Bills”

House Bill 2164, introduced by Republicans in the Iowa House of Representatives, is the latest anti-transgender “bathroom bill” to be filed in the United States. This one seeks to alter the state’s Civil Rights Act.

Rep. Sandy Salmon, in speaking on the bill to the Des Moines Register, claims the bill is solely about protection, not discrimination. “What the bill just says is that schools and businesses are allowed to take action to protect women and girls by preserving access based on biological sex.”

Iowa’s Civil Rights Act was updated in 2007 to include language specific to gender identity and sexual orientation as a protected class. HB 2064 would amend these protections, stating that it would not be unfair nor discriminatory to disallow people the use of sex-segregated spaces based on their birth gender.

HB 2164 is one of a long line of so-called “bathroom bills,” which North Carolina’s HB 2 being the most well known. A similar effort failed to gain traction in Texas last

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