

TRANSADVOCATE

Gender Nation: Killing Pride, Politically Pimping Rape, & Wal-Mart Discriminates Against Trans People

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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. Killing Pride A teacher in Cambridge, New York, was suspended with pay after complaints from parents over a transgender-themed handout. The teacher, reported by the Glens Falls Post-Star as [...]

Article



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Killing Pride

A teacher in Cambridge, New York, was suspended with pay after complaints from parents over a transgender-themed handout.

The teacher, reported by the Glens Falls Post-Star as Jacqueline Hill, teaches health classes for both

the seventh and tenth grades at Cambridge Central School. She was placed on “administrative leave” as a result of her work as an educator.

There were two handouts in question. One, used for the seventh-grade students focused on “LGBTQ terminology,” and included both trans and other terms. The second handout, presented to the tenth-grade students, was a 42-page transgender-specific booklet. Both booklets did end up with both seventh and tenth-grade students, though it was only parents of the seventh-grade students who complained about their content.

Transgender people, as well as other members of the LGBTQ umbrella, are coming out at younger ages than ever before. This has made the inclusion of these topics a necessary part of public school curriculums.

A planned presentation with the cooperation of the Pride Center of the Capital Region was also canceled in this flap. The Pride Center has been presenting at the school for twelve years. This is the first time there has been an issue.

Politically Pimping Rape

Several right-wing websites have desperately latched onto the story of a trans woman who was arrested over a sexual abuse story involving a transgender woman and a child in a restroom, using it as proof of the need for so-called “bathroom bills” to protect women and young girls.

The perpetrator, Michelle Martinez did allegedly rape the ten-year-old victim and faces charges that could lock her away for up to seventy years. Martinez has pleaded not guilty, denying that she raped the girl.

The story has been twisted in a number of right-wing media outlets: while the case in question happened at a private residence and the victim was the daughter of a friend of Martinez, most outlets would like you to believe that Martinez was a male dressing as a woman to gain the privilege to molest a child in a public restroom.

93% of sexual abuse cases involve someone known by the victim, per the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network, but there is no direct link between being transgender and being a sexual predator, nor any proof that a transgender person is more likely to be a sexual predator. Likewise, the argument that people will use transgender rights as a cover for assaulting people in public restrooms falls apart under scrutiny: such laws do not make rape or sexual assault legal simply because a protected class enacts them.

Wal-Mart Discriminates Against Trans People

Wal-Mart has been found guilty in a transgender employment case. The suit, brought by former Sam’s Club employee Jessica Robison, proved that the employer harassed and intimidated Robison after she came out as transgender.

The suit, handled by the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) also found that excluding Robison from the company’s health care was in violation of the law. This is a common issue in health care, with transgender care excluded by many corporate health care policies.

“There is reasonable cause to believe (Sam’s Club) discriminated against (Robison) due to her sex (transgender status/gender identity) and retaliated against (Robison) for engaging in protected activity, by subjecting her to harassment, adverse terms and conditions of employment, discipline, a forced demotion and hostile working environment, in violation of Title VII,” stated a letter of determination from the EEOC.

Wal-Mart must now attempt to reach an agreement with the EEOC to resolve the matter. If such fails, they could face a further court battle.

The inclusion of transgender people under Title VII began during the Obama Administration. It is currently under threat from both The United States Congress and the Trump Administration.

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Suggested citation

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