

TRANSADVOCATE

Transsexual Separatist Slacktivism Doesn't Win Legislatively

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Abstract

Call them classic transsexuals or women of operative history; call them true transsexuals or transsexual separatists -- whatever you call them, you can also call them ineffectual slacktivists. Over at LGBT Weekly where I write the Trans Progressive column, the August 15, 2013 column is about this year's California Transgender Advocacy Day. About fifty people, [...]

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Over at LGBT Weekly where I write the Trans Progressive column, the August 15, 2013 column is about this year's California Transgender Advocacy Day. About fifty people, including trans adults, trans youth, parents of trans youth, and allies lobbied for three bills that will impact trans people -- trans people who are visitors, residents, past residents, and citizens of the state of California.



Figure 1. Image: Approximately 50 California Transgender Advocacy Day Citizen Lobbyists Cheering At The News Governor Brown Signed AB 1266 (The School Success and Opportunity Act) On August 12, 2013

While these citizen lobbyists were lobbying for AB 420 (Disruption and Defiance: Reducing Grounds for Harsh Discipline in public schools, author: Assemblymember Roger Dickinson), SB 716 (the Sexual Abuse in Detention Elimination Act of 2013, author: Senator Ricardo Lara), and AB 1121 (Gender Identity: Petition For Change Of Name, author: Assembly Majority Leader Toni Atkins), Gov. Jerry Brown (D-CA) signed a bill that positively impacts trans youth in public schools -- AB 1266 (School Success and Opportunity Act; author: Assemblymember Tom Ammiano).

How did trans rights advocates and citizen lobbyists win on AB 1266? Well it's the same way we've seen bills that impact trans people in a positive way pass into law in past years. 1.) California is a progressive state, 2.) there are LGBT community civil rights non-profits, such as Equality California, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, and the Transgender Law Center, which develop relationships with LGBT caucus legislators and propose legislation that positively impacts trans people, and 3.) these non-profits organize citizen lobbyists to lobby for legislation that in a positive way impacts trans people.

And, we vote for these legislators that cast votes in the statehouse for us, and so do our allies.

Lamenting that AB 1266 has been signed into law by Gov. Brown, transsexual separatist Jennifer

Usher of Just Jennifer wrote an essay entitled A Very Bad Law. And in the same vein, back in 2011 transsexual separatist Elizabeth of Notes From The T-Side blog argued against AB 433 (the Vital Statistics Modernization Act) in her essay entitled The truth about California Bill AB 433.

Transsexual Separatists over at TS-SI website tried to organize an annual Transsexual Independence Day, and identified it as an annual event to contact legislator in 2011 and 2012. The effort of this lobbying day was described in 2011 as follows:

We urge that all of us, wherever we are in every country and political subdivision, write a letter to the leaders of our respective governments and deliver a direct message:

“People of transsexual history, those born transsexual, have a correctable medical condition that should not be confused with the sociopolitical and lifestyle activism of transgender activists. This is important because the willful confusion imposed by transgenderism deflects effective medical treatment from those who desperately need it.”

We vary in our opinions regarding the great issues of governance that animate our day, proceeding from separate assumptions about what is just, meet, and affordable in our separate countries. We do not ask in this appeal for specific policies or funding. We do not seek advantage over others, but we do ask for our liberty.



Figure 2. Thumbnail Image: 'Slacktivist' Autumn Sandeen with a cup of coffee and a bag of Cheetos -- not fully meeting the blogging standard of also blogging in one's PJ's from one's mother's basement. Photo was taken in November of 2010 a day after Autumn participated in the GetEqual direct action of chaining herself to the White House fence for repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

When lobbying for a piece of social legislation a group of people has to identify an area of concern, identify for a legislator a solution for that concern, propose legislation, organize a lobbying effort to tell legislators as why the solution proposed in the legislation is the right solution to the concern, then an even larger group of people has to lobby-lobby-lobby for that legislation. And, when arguing against a piece of legislation, one has to identify why a particular piece of legislation addresses an illegitimate concern, addresses a wrongheaded concern, or doesn't provide a good solution to a legitimate concern. Then again, a group of people has to lobby-lobby-lobby against the legislation.

The message of Transsexual Independence Day was a complete non sequitur. The organizers weren't lobbying for or against any legislation at all, and they weren't proposing any legislation to address their concerns. In other words, there didn't seem to be any point to contacting their legislators as they weren't making any specific asks of those legislators.

Even Notes From The T-Side's Elizabeth saw problems with the organizing effort for Transsexual Independence Day.

TS-SI closed its doors in October of 2012, and no Transsexual Independence Day was organized for this year. It appears Transsexual Independence Day won't be organized again in the future. Yet, even if it were organized again in a similar manner to how it was organized in 2011 and 2012, the non sequitur messaging would be just as ineffectual as the first two of those lobbying days.

Folk like Jennifer Usher and Elizabeth focus significant parts of their writing on a few bloggers and activists with significant internet presence, but don't actually accomplish anything political in the brick-and-mortar world. They don't even focus on the LGBT non-profits and the non-profit leaders that work on transgender issues with any sustained effort -- again, they just focus on a few bloggers and activists with significant internet presence.

Lament all they want about past legislation like AB 433 and AB 1266 becoming law, and maybe lament some more about this year's AB 1121 likely being signed into law sometime this or next year, but organizing and lobbying in any numbers to fight against legislation is beyond them and their peers' capabilities.

Keyboard activism alone is just slacktivism. What passes for "classic transsexual" and "true transsexual" political activism these days seems pretty much limited to slacktivism directed at a few bloggers and activists with significant internet presence -- slacktivism that doesn't have any political impact whatsoever.

And, may this slacktivism by transsexual separatists always remain as ineffectual as it is now.

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