

CAMP Rehoboth Statement on Growing Anti-Drag Legislation

A rise in anti-drag legislation is currently manifesting in many American states. Estimates point to at least 26 bills introduced in 14 states that target drag events, including in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Texas. The proposed bills aim to restrict drag as “adult cabaret” performances and ban them altogether from public spaces with the intention to protect minors. Earlier this month, Tennessee’s Governor Bill Lee signed the legislation into law; it is set to take effect on April 1, and offenders will be charged with misdemeanors for first offenses, and felonies for second. According to the ACLU, there are many states with similar legislation close behind.

These laws join the larger movement taking aim at LGBTQ+ rights, especially those of transgender and non-binary individuals and disproportionately youth. Examples of other recent bills advancing in state legislatures include efforts to exclude transgender girls from youth sports, to prohibit access for transgender folks to public facilities like restrooms, and alarmingly to prevent gender affirming healthcare for trans youth.

This growing phenomenon works directly against CAMP Rehoboth’s mission to “create a more positive” environment for all sexual orientations and gender identities to be respected. Drag show restrictions limit the free expression of the queer community, enforcing insecurity and marginalizing an already at-risk population. Drag is a joyful art, and a form of entertainment that many of our community’s beloved performers have built their livelihoods on. To label it as a “threat” is not only irresponsible, it’s dangerous. These restrictions, in conjunction with other concurrent anti-LGBTQ bills, create rising tensions and violence.

Safe spaces are paramount to our community, and CAMP Rehoboth has long been a sanctuary for all. CAMP Rehoboth remains committed to providing life-affirming services and resources to Rehoboth Beach and its related communities. Services include Youth Up, a program that connects LGBTQ+ youth and families to information and community-based resources as well as providing advocacy, support, and education. By and large, the program has become a safe space for youth seeking community among others discovering their authentic selves. Even last summer, CAMP Rehoboth’s Youth Up program was proud to host youth and parents at a summertime drag brunch at a local restaurant.

CAMP Rehoboth’s connections with organizations like Point of Pride give opportunities for community members looking to receive gender affirming care or attire by registering for a binder at the community center. Plus, last fall, partnerships with local organizations like ACLU of DE, PFLAG, and PTK (Parents of Trans Kids) saw the opportunity to launch “Know Your Rights”, an ACLU resource guide for LGBTQ+ youth in schools. Many guides are available to view and pick up at the community center.



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CAMP Rehoboth invites all to join our vision where all differences are respected and celebrated in our multifaceted community. Any thriving town, State, or nation relies on this belief, and should work toward that vision by ensuring the free expression, safety, and security of all. For anyone looking for a safe space, CAMP Rehoboth is always open.

If you are looking to get involved, please reach out to info@camprehoboth.com, call 302.227.5620, or stop by the community center during business hours at 37 Baltimore Avenue.

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About CAMP Rehoboth: *CAMP Rehoboth is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit community service organization dedicated to creating a positive environment inclusive of all sexual orientations and gender identities in Rehoboth Beach and its related communities. It seeks to promote cooperation and understanding among all people, as they work to build a safer community with room for all. www.camprehoboth.com*