

Why We Fight

Patrick Hanley | Advocacy and Policy Associate

Allow me to throw some numbers at you:

- **92:** That's the [percentage of LGBTQ students](#) in Texas who regularly heard homophobic remarks and slurs at school.
- **45:** That's the [percentage of LGBTQ students](#) in Texas who regularly heard school staff make negative remarks about gender expression.
- **40:** That's the estimated [percentage of homeless youth](#) who identify as LGBTQ, despite making up only 7% of the youth population.
- **15:** That's the number (at least) of [transgender women murdered](#) in Texas since 2015. More than half the deaths occurred in Dallas alone.
- **125,000:** That's the number of [transgender Texans](#) who are not covered by the state's hate crime laws.
- **27:** That's the percentage of [LGBTQ people in Texas](#) that are food insecure.
- **40:** That's the percentage of [girls in the juvenile justice system](#) who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual. 85-90% of incarcerated LGBTQ youth are youth of color.
- **928,000:** That's the [estimated number of LGBTQ Texans](#) that lack explicit state non-discrimination protections for employment, housing and even being served in public.
- **6:** That's the number of states, including Texas, that continue to have "[no promo homo laws](#)" that restrict any mention of homosexuality in sex ed.
- **26:** That's the number of anti-LGBTQ bills were introduced during the 2019 Texas legislative session.

Shall I go on? While the LGBTQ movement has made so much progress in recent years, these real issues and the impact they make in the daily lives of LGBTQ Texans, are why we fight.

Advocacy has been an integral part of Resource Center dating back to our founding in 1983. In those days, the fight was for survival, for recognition and a simple acknowledgement of the HIV/AIDS epidemic from a President who wouldn't even speak its name.

Much has changed since that time. Resource Center has grown to become one of the largest LGBTQ community centers in the country and a critical voice for the LGBTQ and

HIV/AIDS communities. Today, we continue the fight. Though the issues have evolved, the goal remains the same: equality.

Our Advocacy team has the bold mission to change laws, policies, hearts and minds across North Texas, and beyond. We do that in so many ways: we meet with cities, counties and other local jurisdictions to ask for protections for LGBTQ workers; we stand strong against anti-LGBTQ bills at the Texas Capitol; we push school districts, companies and many other organizations to create more inclusive environments for LGBTQ people to thrive; and, we inform the media and public at large about the issues we face.

And we've been successful:

- We led the efforts to get Dallas ISD to adopt an enumerated anti-bullying policy that includes LGBTQ students.
- We pioneered the first partnership of its kind to bring a comprehensive anti-bullying and LGBTQ allies program to schools covering thousands of students across North Texas.
- We've worked with the City of Dallas and Dallas County to add transgender employment protections and health benefits for municipal employees.
- We helped the City of Irving implement an internal LGBTQ non-discrimination policy for city employees.
- We've partnered with medical schools and hospitals across the area to help them better serve transgender patients.
- We advocated for transgender high school athletes before the UIL Legislative Council to revise the ban-based-on-assigned-gender policy.
- We've delivered LGBTQ cultural competency training to thousands of participants around the state, educating them on how to affirm our community.

But our advocacy isn't about *us*; it's about *you!* **You** are the reason we continue the fight. We envision a world where our state and nation's laws and culture reflect what we already know: that our communities deserve equal treatment and the respect of all.

Want to learn more about the advocacy team at Resource Center and what we do? **Sign up** for Resource Center's monthly newsletter that highlights our work. You will also hear from us with direct call to action from time to time. Stay tuned to this blog and our social media channels to see how you can join in the fight.