

University of Central Florida

**STARS**

---

Honors Undergraduate Theses

---

2024

## Florida's Most Recent Anti-transgender Political Policies and Their Effects on Transgender Adults

Jaron A. Sanchez

University of Central Florida, ja978684@ucf.edu



Part of the American Politics Commons, Gender and Sexuality Commons, Policy Design, Analysis, and Evaluation Commons, Policy History, Theory, and Methods Commons, Politics and Social Change Commons, Social Policy Commons, and the Social Statistics Commons

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/hut2024>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Undergraduate Theses by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact [STARS@ucf.edu](mailto:STARS@ucf.edu).

---

### STARS Citation

Sanchez, Jaron A., "Florida's Most Recent Anti-transgender Political Policies and Their Effects on Transgender Adults" (2024). *Honors Undergraduate Theses*. 8.  
<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/hut2024/8>

FLORIDA'S MOST RECENT ANTI-TRANSGENDER POLITICAL POLICIES  
AND THEIR EFFECTS ON TRANSGENDER ADULTS

by

JARON SANCHEZ

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Honors Undergraduate Thesis program in Political Science  
in the College of Sciences  
and in the Burnett Honors College  
at the University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida

Spring 2024

Thesis Chair: Dr. Aubrey Jewett

## Abstract

During May of 2023, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed multiple bills into law, which included House Bill 1521, Senate Bill 1580, and Senate Bill 254. Critics have regarded these bills to directly discriminate against transgender individuals and negatively impact their quality of life. The main research question this project seeks to answer is what impact these bills have, if any, on transgender individuals who live in the state of Florida. This includes experiences that negatively impact quality of life outcomes and mental health disparities. An online survey of a small sample of the population that self identifies as transgender, that had lived in Florida for at least 1 month prior to and after the passing of the bills and were over 18 years old was used. Participants answered 2 sets of questions using a five-point Likert scale. One set asked about feelings and experiences prior to the passing of the bills, and the other after the passing of the bills, which included questions about mental health disparities seen commonly in transgender individuals such as depression, suicidal ideation and more. A comparison of the average Likert scale score prior to and after the passing of the bills showed a 10-20 percent increase in mental health disparities, and a large decrease in perceived ease of access to healthcare and satisfaction with state governmental support. Across the board, increases to negative mental health and quality of life outcomes were seen in our sample, which paints a troubling picture as to how these types of bills impact transgender quality of life and mental health outcomes.

## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my dear friends Ylva, Pip, Hailey, and all my LGBTQ+ colleagues that have made an impact in my life.

## Acknowledgments

I would personally like to thank my Thesis Chair, Dr. Aubrey Jewett, for his support and mentorship throughout the process of writing this thesis, my Committee Member Dr. Jonathan Knuckey for his insight and his support, my family and friends for their help in keeping me stable while working on this thesis, my partner, for keeping me smiling even when things got tough, and to all the people throughout my academic career who made getting this far possible for me. Again, thank you.

## Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction .....	1
Chapter 2: History of LGBTQ+ Discrimination and Legislation in Florida .....	4
Early History .....	4
The Johns Committee.....	5
Anita Bryant, Protect America’s Children, and the Anita Bryant Ministry.....	7
Comparison of Previous Discrimination to Today .....	9
Chapter 3: Analysis of House Bill 1580, House Bill 1521, and Senate Bill 254.....	11
Senate Bill 1580: Protections Of Medical Conscious .....	11
House Bill 1521: Facility Requirements Based on Sex .....	14
Senate Bill 254: Treatments for Sex Reassignment .....	16
Chapter 4: Methodology and Results.....	20
Hypotheses and Theories .....	20
Methodology .....	21
Results and Discussion.....	24
Chapter 5: Conclusion.....	37
Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research.....	41
References.....	44

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Age of Respondents.....	25
Figure 2: Sample on the Transgender Spectrum.....	26
Figure 3: Sample and College Status.....	27
Figure 4: Respondent Salience/Awareness of Bills.....	28
Figure 5: Comparison of Prior and After Results.....	33

## List of Tables

Table 1: Sample of Questionnaire.....	22
Table 2: Feelings and Experiences PRIOR to Passing of Bills.....	29
Table 3: Feelings or Experiences AFTER Passing of Bills.....	31



## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

‘ABM’ – Anita Bryant Ministry

‘FLIC’ – Florida Legislative Investigation Committee

‘GAB’ – Gender Assigned at Birth

‘HB’ – House Bill

‘LGBTQ+’ – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer+

‘LGB’ – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual

‘PAC’ – Protect America’s Children

‘SB’ – Senate Bill

‘UCF’ – University of Central Florida

‘USTS’ - United States Transgender Survey

## Chapter One: Introduction

During May of 2023, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed multiple bills into law, which included House Bill 1521, as well as Senate Bills 1580 and 254 (“Governor Ron DeSantis Signs Sweeping Legislation”, 2023). We will refer to these through the rest of the paper as HB (bill number) and SB (bill number). These bills have been regarded by some to directly discriminate against transgender individuals, with some going as far as to call it ‘Record Shattering’ (HRC Staff, 2023b). Many, at the very least, consider these bills to be controversial in nature, and something that may directly affect transgender individuals’ overall quality of life. In this paper, we will attempt to find correlation between each of these bills and their effects on self-identified transgender individuals. To do this, we will begin by looking at a brief history of Florida’s anti-LGBTQ+ policy. Then, we will identify and summarize each bill mentioned, those being HB 1521, along with SB 1580 and 254. After laying out each bill, we will then conduct a survey of self-identifying transgender individuals, over the age of 18, who have lived in the state of Florida for at least 1 month prior to and after the passing of the bills. The survey will involve questions tied to determining change in quality of life, or the change in standard health, comfort and happiness experienced in the individual. We will then analyze the results to determine if any statistically significant conclusion is available given the data and sample size.

There has been limited research on the direct effect of anti-transgender (defined as something that will, whether intentional or not, limit freedom and autonomy in transgender identifying persons) bills on transgender individuals. A study done by Barbee, Deal and Gonzales at Vanderbilt University in 2022 details some potential effects of anti-transgender bills, which

could exacerbate health disparities that transgender youths deal with, which included feeling unsafe, being bullied, suicidal thoughts and actions, and drug use (Barbee et al., 2021). While these were transgender youths being surveyed, many of these health disparities can be applied to transgender adults who deal with the same, or similar harmful effects. The Trevor Project, a non-profit organization focused on suicide prevention for youth under the LGBTQ+ umbrella found that in 2023, 41% of LGBTQ+ youth ‘seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year’, with transgender youth being among the highest rates of those surveyed (The Trevor Project, 2023). The survey also found that 2 in 3 LGBTQ+ youth said that hearing about potential state or local laws banning people from discussing LGBTQ+ people at school made their mental health ‘a lot worse’ (The Trevor Project, 2023). Typical transgender adult mental health disparities include an increased risk of depression, substance use disorder, suicidal ideation, and more, which, as previously mentioned is also found in transgender youth, and could be worsened by the introduction and passing of discriminatory legislation (Barbee et al., 2021; Carmel & Erickson-Schroth, 2016). Another LGBTQ+ survey focused on transgender Americans, the 2022 U.S. Transgender Survey, recently released their ‘Early Insights Report’ in February of 2024, which finds comparable results to the Trevor Project (James et al., 2024). In this survey (or, the early insights of the survey), 60% of 16-17 year old transgender respondents were found to have experienced some form of mistreatment or discrimination in school- and nearly 80% of adult respondents experienced the same (during their time in K-12 schooling) (James et al., 2024). This survey also found that Florida was one of the top ten states that respondents moved away from due to discriminatory laws (James et al., 2024). While youths were the focus of most of these studies, again, we can apply similar outcomes to adults- whether that is increased or

decreased feelings of suicide or attempts at suicide, increased or decreased feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and separation from friends or family around them. However, none of these studies cover specifically transgender adults and the possible connections to the laws that were passed in May of 2023 in Florida.

It is the goal of this research project to, one, fill the gap in the research of transgender persons in the state of Florida following the passing of this legislation, and two, provide others with a basis to begin further research into these outcomes with bigger sample sizes, data sets, and funding. This exploratory research can help provide future researchers ways to test potential effects and help make lawmakers and people alike aware to the potential downsides and negative outcomes associated with anti-transgender legislation, as there is limited data, specifically for those transgender individuals living in the state of Florida, in that regard. Cohesive data is the first step to helping bring transgender adults the help they need to avoid these types of negative outcomes, and to improve conditions for them as well. It is also the first step in providing those who create the laws with specific data that could create arguments for potentially life-saving legislation for some transgender people currently living in the state of Florida.

To begin, an in-depth history of LGBTQ+ discrimination and legislation in the state of Florida will give us the context to where these types of bills found their origin, and where bill supporters and anti-transgender activists found their talking points and arguments.

## Chapter 2: History of LGBTQ+ Discrimination and Legislation in Florida

### Early History

Inherently anti-LGBTQ+ legislation has had a foothold on Florida and major parts of the south for almost 200 years prior to the most recent passing of House Bill 1521, Senate Bill 1580, and Senate Bill 254. This began with the passing of sodomy laws, which were commonplace in all the original American colonies (as the laws were part of English common and statutory law) in 1868 (Terl, 2000). Homosexuality and sodomy were considered crimes on the basis that they were ‘crimes against nature’ (Terl, 2000). 49 years later, in 1917, the Florida legislature modified the law to add more restrictions against what they called ‘unnatural and lascivious’ acts, which hurt the sexual freedom and privacy rights of gay men and women even more (Terl, 2000). At this point in Florida’s history, being a homosexual and participating in homosexual acts was considered a grave crime punishable by ‘imprisonment in the state prison not exceeding twenty years’ - meaning if you were found guilty of participating in either ‘anal-genital copulation’ or ‘oral-genital copulation’, you could serve up to 20 years in a Florida state prison (Jones, 1959). It is interesting to note that, while these laws- particularly the sexual nature of the laws- would discriminate against LGBTQ+ people more-so than any other population, these laws could also affect heterosexual couples participating in sexual conduct other than traditional copulation. In later years (1954), Dade County (in the city of Miami) prohibited lesbians, gays or ‘perverts’ from being able to work at places with a liquor license, and prohibited serving this same group drinks, which was another step back for the overall rights of LGBTQ+ people in Florida (Terl, 2000).

## The Johns Committee

One of the biggest and notable anti-LGBTQ+ moments in Florida's long history of discrimination was the forming of the Investigative Committee. The original Investigative Committee, under the command of Henry Land, was not designed to investigate LGBT people and communities, instead, being for race relations- Florida Senator Charley Johns would ultimately oversee changing this, as he became the committee's new leader (Terl, 2000). The new Johns led FLIC (Florida Legislative Investigation Committee), founded in 1956 and referenced today as the 'Johns Committee', would become one of the biggest threats to LGBTQ+ people living in Florida they would ever see. Originally, the Johns Committee wasn't designed to discriminate against people of the LGBTQ+ community, instead, opting to try to discriminate against those participating in the Civil Rights Movement, with many attempts to get rid of the NAACP presence in Florida (Schnur, 1997). When their agenda failed to result in hurting the ongoing Civil Rights Movement, they moved towards going after another marginalized group- the LGBTQ+ community, who they saw as the 'homosexual menace', and who they would spend the next decade mercilessly attacking through the use of spies and infiltrators, who targeted known spaces where members of the LGBTQ+ community would meet, luring them into private spaces where members of the committee would catch and document them with cameras (Schnur, 1997). This was done off the back of McCarthyism – seeing same-gender attraction as directly connected to communism (as it was 'different'), and thereby subversive and anti-democratic; this phenomenon is also known as the 'Lavender Scare' (Haynes, 2020). The University of Florida became a heavy target of this- as many of those being arrested for the crime of being gay, lesbian, or bisexual were found to also be teachers at the university, leading the committee to

focus on identifying gays and lesbians on the campus (Cassanello & Mills, 2016). The committee ended up arresting and interrogating some 200 combined students, teachers, and staff at the University of Florida – leading to a blatant infringement of civil rights and liberties (Cassanello & Mills, 2016). Many students were completely barred from attending public university and teachers were left without a job and were sometimes left with a permanent target on their back, leaving the Florida LGBTQ+ community in shambles (Cassanello & Mills, 2016). The LGBTQ+ community in Florida still feels the impact of this today, with many older LGBTQ+ Florida citizens being survivors of the discrimination seen back in the 1950s and 60s (Cassanello & Mills, 2016). The state of Florida and the University of Florida have yet to apologize for the Johns committee and its actions. This could be seen as one of the worst infractions on the civil rights of LGBT rights in Florida’s history, as the committee specifically targeted the group because of their lack of power at the time, and completely ignored Florida citizens civil rights to privacy. The committee dissolved eventually, in 1965, but this would not be the last time that the LGBTQ+ community would see discrimination in Florida.

### Anita Bryant, Protect America's Children, and the Anita Bryant Ministry

Sometime later, after the Johns committee was eventually dissolved, there came another antagonist to the LGBTQ+ community in Florida- Anita Bryant. Anita Bryant, known before her anti-LGBTQ+ campaign as Ms. Oklahoma, a Miss. American runner-up, and a Top 40 Singer who was the spokesperson for the Florida orange juice industry, or rather, the Florida Citrus Commission in the early 1970s (Eugenios, 2022). Many advertisements contained her singing and talking about the benefits of orange juice, from the 'Florida Sunshine Free' with the character 'Orange Bird' (originally a Disney character, then made into the Florida Citrus Commission's mascot and thereby, the mascot for Florida oranges) (Anderson, 2022; Eugenios, 2022). But, in 1976- things changed. Seeing the growing lesbian and gay social movements and communities of the mid 1970s, and after the passing of discrimination protections in Dade County (which, at this point, was a significant win for the LGBTQ+ community in Florida at the time) Anita Bryant decided to start a campaign of her own after being relatively quiet politically- one which would be seen historically as bigoted, hateful, and full of discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community (Eugenios, 2022; Fetner, 2001; Johnson, 2019). She formed the political group called 'Protect America's Children', or PAC, (previously known as 'Save Our Children', eventually renamed to PAC) which was almost entirely dedicated to stopping the progress of the gay liberation movement in Dade County by repealing the antidiscrimination ordinance previously passed, and eventually, antidiscrimination ordinances across the country (Eugenios, 2022; Johnson, 2019). In her campaign against the LGBTQ+ community, through PAC, she regularly referenced the idea that homosexuals and lesbians were attempting to 'recruit' children into the rising gay liberation movement, as they '[could not] reproduce, so they must recruit'



(Eugenios, 2022). Her talking points, along with the growing power of PAC in Dade County, led to the labeling of many homosexual people as a danger to children, which ended up taking Dade County by storm, and started to spread amongst the social conservatives living there (Eugenios, 2022; Johnson, 2019). The growing number evangelical Christian conservative members of PAC found that the antidiscrimination ordinance was ‘...a peril to the nation’, and saw the greater LGBTQ+ community as group of people who were ‘deviant’ and needed to be ‘saved’; she also ended up creating a separate group because of this, named ‘Anita Bryant Ministries’, or ABM, dedicated to what is essentially conversion therapy, or the idea that one’s ‘gayness’ could be forced out by the ‘Holy Spirit’, making them ‘clean’ again (Eugenios, 2022; Fetner, 2001; Frank, 2013). Anita Bryant herself saw the movement not as something that was homophobic, but a campaign that was formed out of ‘love’ for gay people, and many others felt the same way (Eugenios, 2022). PAC, ABM and Bryant saw something like a antidiscrimination ordinance as a way to give those in the LGBTQ+ special privileges over everyone else- Bryant saw this as a slippery slope, and that, if we end up giving LGBTQ+ people civil rights, what would murderers from wanting ‘murderer[‘s] rights’ (Eugenios, 2022). Her arguments ended up being persuasive- as she, PAC, and ABM ended up getting enough signatures for a repeal referendum for the ordinance; on June 7<sup>th</sup>, 1977, the referendum passed by an overwhelming majority of 69.3%, successfully repealing the antidiscrimination ordinance (Eugenios, 2022; Fetner, 2001; Frank, 2013; Johnson, 2019). Overall, Bryant’s campaign showed some of what the worst is for LGBTQ+ politics in Florida, and completely defamed LGBTQ+ people for being a danger to children, while also using her faith to claim this was being done for the good of LGBTQ+ people- a metaphorical ‘slap in the face’ for gay liberation activists back in the 1970s, and

largely, a step back for LGBTQ+ rights in general (Eugenios, 2022). Bryant's campaign could be seen as the start of what we know now as the 'culture wars' here in Florida and the rest of the United States- which have negatively impacted transgender people since they have become the latest target of it (Alfonseca, 2023, Eugenios, 2022; Johnson, 2019;).

### Comparison of Previous Discrimination to Today

Today we see a similar struggle between the transgender community- approval of lesbians and homosexuals has been on the rise for quite some time, and in America, we see it is the very high, especially for acceptance of homosexual or lesbian marriage- this leaves a hole which the LGB's of the LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual) filled for the Johns Committee and Anita Bryant's campaign against the gay community (Gallup 2019; Pew Research Center, 2019). This is not to say that the greater LGBTQ+ community still isn't discriminated against, as that is simply not true, but we can consider that the transgender community has filled this hole, one similar to the LGB community back during the time of the Johns committee, as the transgender community in the greater LGBTQ+ community lacks a lot of power to fight back, in comparison to lesbians, gays and bisexuals. It is also being lambasted using arguments similar to those used by Anita Bryant and her anti-LGBTQ+ campaign as previously discussed, with claims that transgender people are inherently dangerous to children through arguments about transgender bathroom laws (similar to a bill we will discuss later, HB 1521: Facility requirements based on sex) (Eugenios, 2022; Pollard, 2024). We also see arguments about the safety of children, in a new context, through the newer phenomena of transgender youth; some see transitioning as an

adolescent to be ‘child abuse’, as laid out in one of the bills we are about to cover- SB 254: Treatments of Sex Reassignment- and see the prevention of this as a way to save the youth from ‘corruption’ from liberal, leftist, and/or LGBTQ+ political agendas (Pollard, 2024; The Florida Senate, 2023c). The politicization of sexual and gender identities has been a problem ever since the Johns committee was established; as, at that point, being under the LGBTQ+ umbrella was not simply a sexuality or a gender identity, it was seen as a crime, and thereafter, an abomination and something that should be prevented from seeing the light of day (Eugenios, 2022; Pollard, 2024; Terl, 2000). Just like the Johns committee and Anita Bryant dehumanized lesbians and gays, many anti-transgender activists dehumanize transgender people and see them similarly to how Anita Bryant and ABM saw gays and lesbians- people who are deviant, unholy, and confused, and people who need help in a religious sense rather than support in confirming their preferred gender identity (Eugenios, 2022; Pollard 2024; Terl, 2000). As we will see in the next section, a discussion of three bills that were passed by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, the bills are the latest extension of the recent uptick in transgender discrimination, based on moral panics seen previously in Florida’s history of LGBTQ+ discrimination.

## Chapter 3: Analysis of House Bill 1580, House Bill 1521, and Senate Bill 254

We cannot attempt to study the effects of bills like House Bill 1521, Senate Bill 1580, and Senate Bill 254 without first analyzing what the bills do, or how they could potentially cause the effects we are attempting to find in the first place. In this section we will dissect each of the three bills and their wordings, to properly understand what is being proposed and why we might consider the bills ‘Anti-Transgender’.

### Senate Bill 1580: Protections Of Medical Conscious

Senate Bill 1580, put into law on May 12th, 2023, states that ‘health care providers and health care payors have the right to opt out of participation in or payment for certain health care services if they have a ‘conscience-based objection’ (The Florida Senate, 2023a). The first aspect of this statement we need to be aware of is the vagueness of giving health care providers and payors the right to say no to patients, through not paying for or administering care. Section 2 of the bill defines ‘health care payor’ as a health insurer, employer, health care sharing organization, health plan organization, or any other entity that pays for or arranges the payment of any health care service (regardless of it is payment in whole or in part) (The Florida Senate, 2023a). This makes it so that regardless of where you are, as a transgender person, in the process of attempting to attain procedures such as HRT (hormone treatment therapy), sexual reassignment surgery, or any other procedure that would help with gender dysphoria, there is always someone down the line that can deny you medical service based on ‘moral, ethical, or religious convictions’ (The Florida Senate, 2023a). Therein, the ‘Right of Medical Conscious’, or the idea

of ‘conscience-based’ in ‘conscience-based objections’ is defined as ‘the right of a health care provider or health care payor to abide by sincerely held religious, moral, or ethical beliefs’ (The Florida Senate, 2023a). The terms ‘moral’ and ‘ethical’ are not defined within the bill, which leads to a concerning vagueness within the definition of ‘conscience-based’, resulting in those who might want to discriminate against transgender individuals being able to have their beliefs fall under the category of ‘ethical’, ‘moral’, or ‘religious’, ultimately ending in transgender individuals being unfairly treated and discriminated against in the realm of health care service. It is also extremely important to note that combined with the fact that nearly every person along the health care line for transgender individuals, including but not limited to doctors, health insurers, employers, pharmacists, or most people licensed to practice medicine (as per Section 2.F), this leads to anyone being able to stop someone from getting treatment regardless of how close one might be to getting something done that could be life-saving for them in the long run, which could result in increased negative effects of already negative mental health and quality of life disparities found in transgender individuals (Carmel & Erickson-Schroth, 2016; The Florida Senate, 2023a). The medical procedures that a person involved with a patient’s healthcare that those mentioned before can object to include ‘medical research, medical procedures, or medical services, including, but not limited to, testing; diagnosis; referral; dispensing or administering any drug, medication, or device; psychological therapy or counseling; research; therapy; record-making procedures; set up or performance of a surgery or procedure; or any other care or services performed or provided by any health care provider’ (The Florida Senate, 2023a). In essence, nearly any type of medical treatment that could be provided to a transgender person, whether that is surgery, or something as simple as basic psychological counseling, could be

denied because the doctor, hospital, pharmacist, or anyone that the patient needs to interact with to get treatment believes that it would interfere with a moral or ethical belief. Overall, this bill is overly vague and leads to some potentially life-threatening outcomes for transgender individuals, as they can be legally discriminated against for any reason (if the person objecting to the care has a firmly held religious, ethical or moral belief), either through the refusal of care from a health care provider, or the refusal of payment through a health care payor, which includes things like testing, receiving drugs, medication, or even psychological therapy- all of which play a fundamental role in the treatment of gender dysphoria (Anderson et al., 2022; The Florida Senate, 2023a). In fact, per the USTS 2022 Early Insights report (previously mentioned in the introduction) found that 84% of nearly all respondents felt ‘A Lot More Satisfied’ with life after hormone treatment, 88% of nearly all respondents felt ‘A Lot More Satisfied’ with life after receiving gender affirming surgery, and 79% of nearly all respondents felt ‘A Lot More Satisfied’ with life after transitioning their gender; this bill gets directly in the way of these improved quality of life outcomes, through individuals being able to discriminate against transgender people in healthcare (James et al., 2024). This bill could even result in the refusal of service for treatments completely unrelated to someone being transgender; if the person providing or paying for care, regardless of it is for gender dysphoria or not, has an ethical, moral, or religious belief that is firmly held, they can deny a any person from getting treatment (based on the wording of the bill) (The Florida Senate, 2023a). These treatments have resulted in overall better outcomes in depression and suicidality, both of which have been previously mentioned to be large health disparities for transgender persons (Carmel & Erickson-Schroth, 2016; Tordoff et al., 2022), and the prevention of this population from getting care can only result in negative outcomes overall

for those persons. As of today, no lawsuits have been filed specifically against the bill, though many have condemned the bill (like the ALCU and the Human Rights Campaign) for being broad, a ‘License to Discriminate’, and an overall detriment to Florida’s healthcare system due to the idea of ‘Conscience-based objections’ (ACLU, 2023; HRC Staff 2023a). Time will tell if this bill receives significant challenges that will help transgender people receive the gender affirming medical care they need to treat gender dysphoria.

#### House Bill 1521: Facility Requirements Based on Sex

Transgender bathroom laws have been at the center of the public debate stage for quite some time. This bill targets those that might identify as one gender, but biologically be another. Specifically, the bill ‘prohibits willfully entering restroom or changing facility designated for opposite sex and refusing to depart when asked to do so’ (The Florida Senate, 2023b). This specifically affects public buildings owned or maintained by the state of Florida, or by local governments- which includes public colleges/universities (The Florida Senate, 2023b). The opening statement in section one of the bill states that ‘The Legislature finds that females and males should be provided restrooms and changing facilities for their exclusive use, respective to their sex, in order to maintain public safety, decency, decorum and privacy’ (The Florida Senate, 2023b). This aligns with the notion that it is inherently dangerous to have transgender people in bathrooms that are aligned with their preferred gender, and not their gender assigned at birth. It is the idea of some that transgender people, as a group, are more predatory, or that men simply dressed as women, or vice versa, will use the idea of being transgender to prey on other people. This bill and other bills like it are designed to prevent perceived attempts of violence against

women by transgender women. The fact of the matter is that the narrative that transgender women, or even men attempt to pose as transgender women committing assaults on women is wrong. A study published by the Journal of Sexuality Research and Social Policy, by Hasenbush, Flores and Herman found that ‘reports of privacy and safety violations in public restrooms, locker rooms and changing rooms were exceedingly rare and much lower than statewide rates of reporting violent crimes more generally’ (Murchison et al., 2019). While this study was done in North Carolina, its results are relevant to the conversation since the state introduced a similar law, HB 2, or North Carolina’s Public Facilities Privacy and Security Act. The study also looked at bills that did the opposite of anti-transgender bills like HB 2, or bills that prevented discrimination of transgender people in bathrooms and found that there was no relation between nondiscrimination bills and the number or frequency of crimes described previously in public spaces (Murchison et al., 2019). House Bill 1521 specifically discriminates against transgender people seeking to use the bathroom or changing room of their preferred gender. While technically it does cover cisgender people going into the bathroom or changing room of a different sex, this act is already seen as taboo in the United States and most places (grocery stores, clothing stores, etc.) have policy or actions in place to prevent and punish this act. The bills also define both ‘male’ and ‘female’ in a way that intentionally excludes transgender persons, ‘male’ being defined as ‘a person belonging, at birth, to the biological sex which has the specific reproductive role of producing sperm’ and ‘female’ as ‘a person belonging, at birth, to the biological sex which has the specific reproductive role of producing eggs’ (Florida Senate Regulatory and Economic Development Subcommittee, 2023; The Florida Senate, 2023b). Both definitions fail to include any attention to the fact that transgender male and female persons exist



and want use the bathroom of their preferred gender to help their gender dysphoria; it is a part of living as the gender that you prefer rather than the one you are assigned at birth, and can result in better mental health outcomes across the board for transgender individuals (Anderson et al., 2022). Preventing transgender people from doing this simple task impacts their gender dysphoria and therefore negatively impacts their mental health outcomes. As for lawsuits, this bill did receive one from the Southern Legal Counsel and the Center for Constitutional Rights during September of 2023- they filed on behalf of a group called ‘Women in Struggle’ (a group ‘dedicated to the empowerment and advancement of all women’) and argued that the bill was unconstitutional and contributes to the many bills targeting transgender people (Southern Legal Counsel, 2023). Women in Struggle, et al. v. Bain, et al., as it is known, wanted a temporary restraining order that prevent enforcement of the bill, but was ultimately voluntarily dismissed by the plaintiffs of the case, leaving the bill relatively unscathed (Southern Legal Counsel, 2023).

#### Senate Bill 254: Treatments for Sex Reassignment

This bill could be considered as the most discriminatory of all the bills discussed, in regard to transgender persons in the state of Florida. This bill grants courts in the state of Florida ‘temporary emergency jurisdiction over a child present in this state if the child has been subjected to or is threatened with being subjected to sex-reassignment prescriptions or procedures’ (The Florida Senate, 2023c). The bill also states that this is provided that ‘for purposes of warrants to take physical custody of a child in certain child custody enforcement proceedings, serious physical harm to the child includes, but is not limited to, being subjected to

sex-reassignment prescriptions or procedures’ - which classifies any type of gender affirming care for minors as child abuse, in essence (The Florida Senate, 2023c). This bill directly prohibits sex-reassignment prescriptions and procedures for patients under the age of 18 and requires the ‘suspen(sion) [of] the license of a health care practitioner who is arrested for committing or attempting, soliciting, or conspiring to commit specified violations related to sex-reassignment prescriptions or procedures for a patient younger than 18 years of age’ (The Florida Senate, 2023c). There is much to unpack in this bill, but it is important to have context for what is meant by ‘sex reassignment prescriptions’. Gender affirming HRT, or hormone treatment therapy, as discussed in previous sections, is an important step in treating gender dysphoria for transgender people, that falls under the definition of ‘sex reassignment prescriptions’, which, under Section 4.2 of the bill is ‘The prescription or administration of hormones or hormone antagonists to affirm a person’s perception of his or her sex if that perception is inconsistent with the person’s sex’ (The Florida Senate, 2023c). For the best mental health outcomes, it is usually recommended that transgender people start this treatment in early to late adolescence (ages 13 to 15, and 16 to 17 respectively) (Turban et al., 2022). When done in this way, odds of suicidal ideation are lowered by as much as 135% in those starting HRT in early adolescence, and 62% in those who started HRT in late adolescence (Turban et al., 2022). Another survey, the previously mentioned USTS 2022, also shows a similar result, with 84% of respondents feeling ‘A Lot More Satisfied’ with their lives following HRT (James et al., 2024). Psychological distress is also lowered in these groups, by 222% and 153% respectively (Turban et al., 2022). Puberty blockers, in the same category as gender affirming HRT, would also be banned within the definition of ‘sex reassignment prescriptions’, but are also vitally important for transgender adult’s mental

health outcomes. A study done by Salas-Humara et al. shows that not only are puberty blockers safe, with little side effects on those that take it, it also helps improve mental health outcomes for those that have gender dysphoria (Salas-Humara et al., 2019). Mainly, it gives transgender individuals a chance to ‘pause’ their puberty, which allows them time to decide whether they would like to continue with transitioning or stop altogether if they find they are comfortable with their GAB. Being able to think about this particularly major decision in a transgender person’s life without having to worry about going through puberty of your GAB ends up providing those individuals with better mental health outcomes across the board (Salas-Humara et al., 2019). Another fact to note is that puberty blockers have not just been used for those with gender dysphoria as gender affirming care; puberty blockers have been used safely with cisgendered youth as well, in cases where puberty is happening too early or too fast (Spoto, 2023). There has been little to no controversy written about the use of puberty blockers in cisgender children and has been used since the 1990s to help cisgender children develop at a steady pace; but recent uproar about the use of these same methods with those going through gender dysphoria has, for the most part, ignored this fact and the history of the use of puberty blockers (Spoto, 2023). With this knowledge in mind, we can say that, for transgender adults, it is better for multiple different mental health outcomes that they start gender affirming HRT and/or puberty blockers in early to late adolescence rather than starting it after the age of 18; this is due to the fact that the person who is transgender can experience puberty for their preferred gender, rather than having to go through the puberty of their GAB (Salas-Humara et al., 2019; Turban et al., 2022). When you remove the option, like this bill does, you are prohibiting something that, for transgender people, could be lifesaving, or, at the very least, can lead to much better mental health outcomes into

adulthood. This bill realistically only affects people who are struggling with gender dysphoria, especially transgender youth, and negatively impacts them as well, with disregard for overall mental health outcomes for those that consider themselves transgender. As such, it has been the subject of a large lawsuit that questions the constitutionality of the bill- Doe v. Ladapo (GLAD, 2023). The case was started before the bill was initially passed, in March of 2023, and was started mostly by families of transgender youth (GLAD 2023). These families (with the help of GLAD, Human Rights Campaign, etc.) initially sought an emergency ruling to make sure their transgender children could resume seeking medical care, and when that failed, moved towards filing a temporary restraining order which could block enforcement of SB 254 (GLAD, 2023). Eventually, the families were able to get a small victory, through the issuing of a preliminary injunction from a federal court on SB 254, which gave the families challenging the ban access to medical care for their transgender children (GLAD, 2023). Recently, during December of 2023, the case was argued and this led to the creation and certification of two types of classes in the suit- transgender adults seeking gender affirming care, and transgender youth seeking gender affirming care (with an additional subclass that includes transgender youth who were not able receive treatment before the effective date of SB 254), which is a positive move, but the case is still ongoing (GLAD, 2023).

## Chapter 4: Methodology and Results

### Hypotheses and Theories

To attempt to answer the research question, that being to find correlation between the passing of the bills and transgender mental health and quality of life outcomes, we theorize 2 distinct hypotheses:

- H0- There is no increase in mental health disparities and diminished quality of life outcomes following the passing of the bills.
- H1- There is an increase in mental health disparities and diminished quality of life outcomes following the passing of the bills.

H0 is our null hypothesis, in the case that no increase or decrease is seen within the comparison our data. H1, an increase in both mental health disparities and diminished quality of life following the passing of the bills, would make sense looking at what each bill does to impact transgender adults. The fact that these bills discriminate against and make it harder for transgender adults to live as their preferred gender identity would lead us to believe that the passing of said bills could increase things like depression, suicidal ideation, and more (as the lack of treatment of gender dysphoria through allowing the person to live as their preferred gender identity typically leads to such outcomes) (Anderson et al., 2022; Carmel & Erickson-Schroth, 2016). There is always a possibility for a potential decrease in mental health disparities and diminished quality of life outcomes following the passing of the bills, but the chances of this seem slim- this is mostly due to the negative outlook many transgender individuals have put on bills similar to the ones we surveyed about. For example, in the Trevor Project's 2023 national

survey of LGBTQ+ youth and young adults found nearly 1 in 3 people surveyed said their mental health was poor most or all of the time due to anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, and also found that 2 in 3 of the same respondents said that these types of laws made their mental health a lot worse (The Trevor Project, 2023). This would make any chance of a potential decrease in these outcomes very small, and therefore not something we considered; our null hypothesis, in the case that this is found, still covers this event.

### Methodology

To evaluate these hypotheses, we created an online survey that covers mental health disparities seen more in transgender people than their cisgendered counterparts. For example, respondents answered questions about things like suicidal ideation, depression, feelings of hopelessness, and fear of violence and discrimination based on gender identity. The survey also covers events and experiences that may impact transgender persons quality of life. For example, we asked questions about whether respondents felt the need to move out of Florida to another country or state, whether healthcare was easy to access, etc... The full set of questions can be seen in the table below, Table 1: Sample of Questionnaire.

Table 1

Sample of Questionnaire

Feeling or Experience	Strongly Disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Suicidal thoughts and/or ideation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Depression	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feelings of hopelessness or the feeling that things won't get better	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The need to move out from Florida to a different country or state	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discriminated against because of your gender identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ease of accessing healthcare pertaining to gender identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Satisfaction with state governmental support of gender identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of support from family based on gender identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Uncomfortableness using the bathroom of your preferred gender identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Uncomfortableness in public because of your gender identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fear or concern of violence or harassment upon you because of your gender identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Questions based on typical transgender mental health disparities and experiences that affect quality of life.

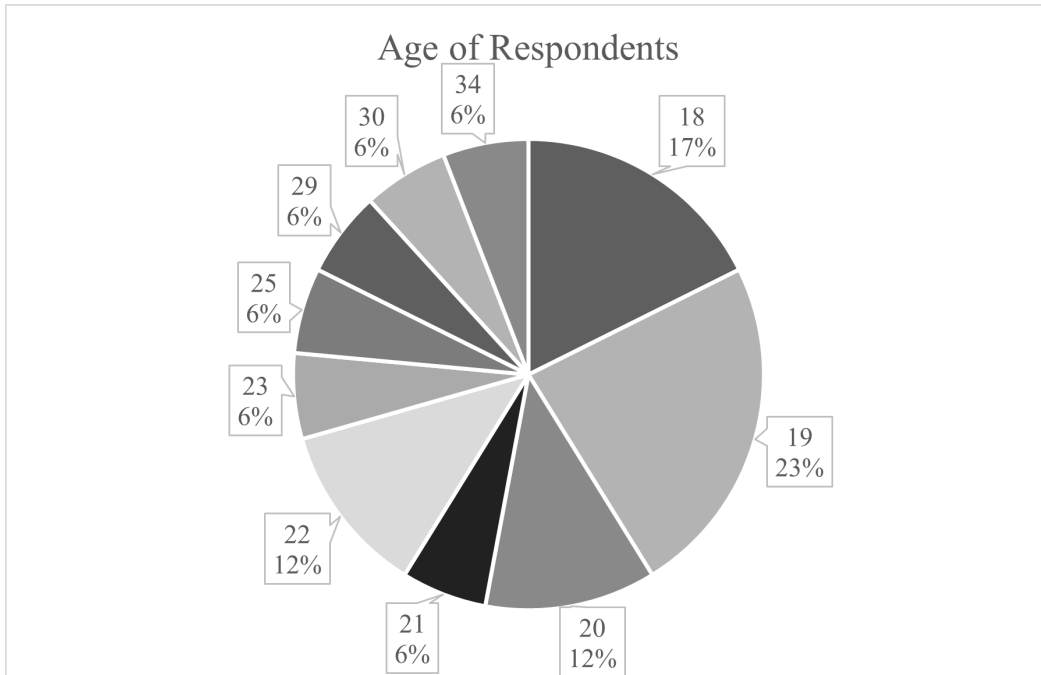
This set of questions was asked twice, one set for how the respondents felt prior to the passing of the bills and another set for after. Respondents were required to be over the age of 18, self-identify under the transgender spectrum, and to have lived in Florida at least one month prior to and after May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, which would be when all of the bills were passed. We saw a month prior to and after May 18<sup>th</sup> to be enough time for those, in the case that they had just moved to Florida, to experience any potential changes in perceived feelings of mental health disparities or quality of life outcomes. Questions were asked on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree (coded as 1) to Strongly Agree (coded as 5) (a common Likert Scale attitude range) (Brown, 2010). We felt the Likert Scale would be the best way to test these variables, as it is commonly used to measure respondent's opinions and attitudes, which is the ultimate aim of the research (Joshi et al., 2015). Respondents were also asked about their perceived salience about the bills and were then given bill summaries after the question that were taken from the Florida Senate's website, using a similar Likert-Scale from 'Not aware at all' to 'Very Aware', coded 1-5. To recruit respondents, we sent a flyer to multiple UCF affiliated social media accounts from various sites, including Instagram, Discord, and Reddit (this was done after receiving admin approval from each group). The majority of respondents came from the 'Pride Student Association at UCF' Discord server, as they were one of few places our flyer was able to be published, and compared to other recruitment sources, was a much more active community. This led to most impressions coming from an announcement made by the Director of student affairs of the group, and thereby, the most respondents (which is assumed due to the majority of respondents coming from one single day, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024, which was the same day this announcement was made in the server). The group is made up primarily of LGBTQ+ students at



UCF, making most of our population not randomly sampled but self-selected (or a sort of convenience sample, given limited resources), which may not be inclusive of the greater transgender population living in Florida.

### Results and Discussion

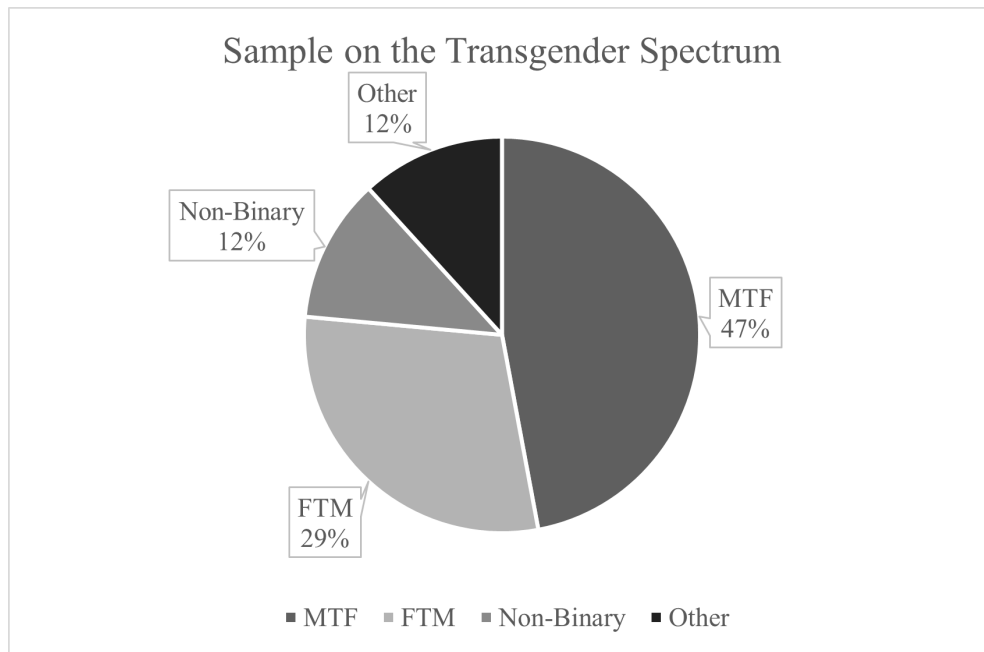
Seventeen transgender individuals responded to our survey. Unfortunately, this is not enough to make statistically significant conclusions about data gathered. However, this does open the door to future research studies that involve a similar question set, but with a larger sample size. We will still discuss the findings of our sample, so it can be compared later in future studies. We asked a few preliminary questions at the beginning of the survey, to see what makes up our sample. We asked respondents their age, where they identify on the transgender spectrum, and whether they were college students.



**Figure 1: Age of Respondents**  
 Shown as percentage out of 100% (17 total respondents)

The first question we asked was the respondent's age. Responses of age ranged between a low of 18, and a high of 34. Most respondents fell into the range of 18-22, with this range accounting for about 71% of responses. The biggest percentage for all responses was that of 19-year-

olds, who accounted for 23% of responses, followed by 18-year-olds with 17%. These results somewhat line up with the USTS 2022's respondent age, where 43% of respondents were 18-24 (James et al., 2024).

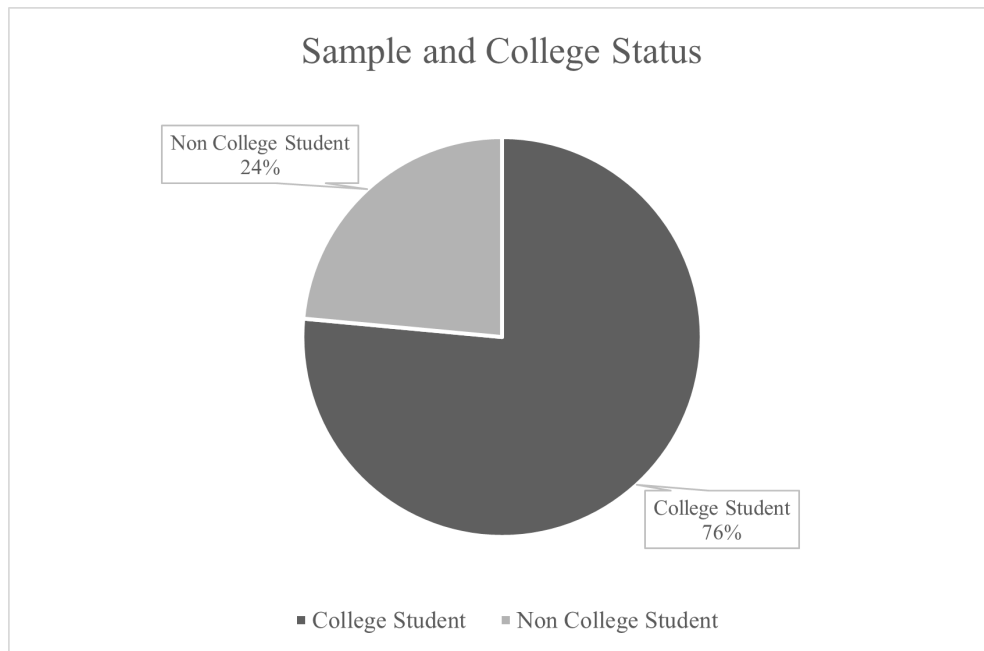


**Figure 2: Sample on the Transgender Spectrum**  
Shown as percentage out of 100% (17 total respondents)

Regarding the gender identity of the 17 respondents, we offered 3 choices: Male-to-Female (MTF), Female-to-Male (FTM), and other, in which the respondent could insert their own gender identity. Of the respondents, 8 of them were 'Male to Female' transgenders (MTF) (47%), and 5 of them were 'Female to Male' transgenders (FTM) (29%). 4 respondents selected the 'Other' option, and of those 4, 2 were 'Non-Binary' (12%), 1 was 'Two-Spirit' (6%), and 1 was 'Gender Non-Conforming Female to Male' (6%). This does not line up with the USTS

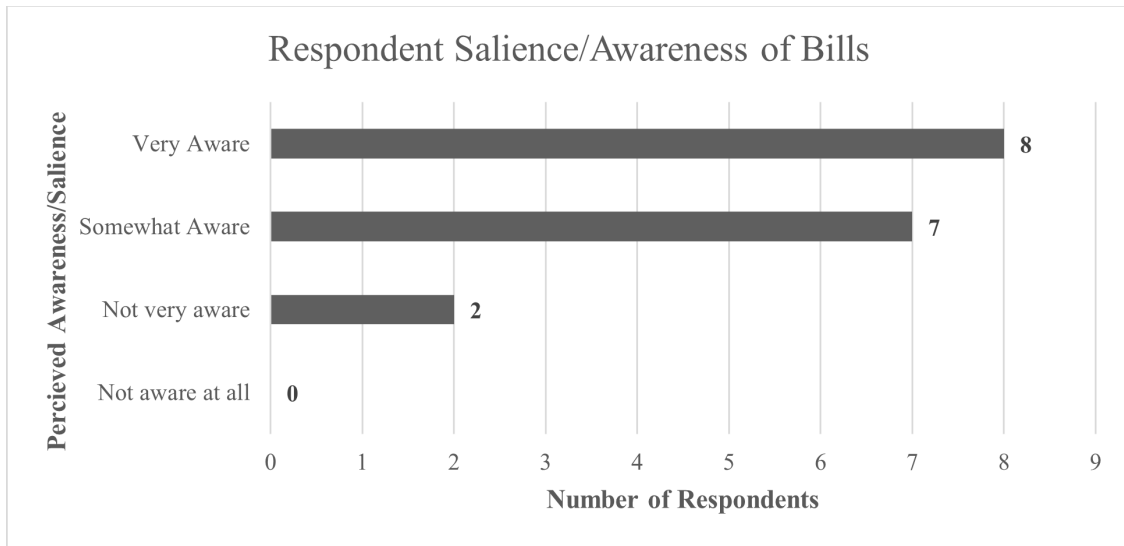
2022's respondent gender identities, where 'Non-Binary' (38% of respondents) and 'Transgender Women' (35% of respondents) made up most of the population surveyed (James et al., 2024).

Lastly, we asked respondents whether they were in college or not. 76% of all respondents, or 13 of the 17 total, were college students, and 24%, or 4 of the 17, were not. As we recruited using mainly UCF-affiliated social media groups, this population would make sense.



**Figure 3: Sample and College Status**  
Shown as percentage out of 100% (17 total respondents)

We also tested for salience or awareness of the bills that we discussed, before leading into the next sections. We find this important to test, as perceived salience could impact the effects of bills on transgender people in regards to mental health and quality of life outcomes (i.e. less awareness may result in less impact of the bills passing, as if one doesn't know that they passed or the bills themselves, they may not see some effects until after something happens to them).



**Figure 4: Respondent Salience/Awareness of Bills**  
 Total respondents = 17

The data suggests that most respondents were at least somewhat aware of the bills, with about 88% of respondents falling under the ‘Somewhat Aware’ or ‘Very Aware’ categories. Most respondents fell under the ‘Very Aware’ category, making up about 47% of the total. While there is not a high enough population to make proper to statistically significant conclusions on, this elevated level of salience might be due to these bills directly impact transgender adult’s lives, leaving them to learn about them sooner or later- this is especially true when it comes to healthcare. Further studies could extend this conversation, provide a broader population, and see if similar percentages are drawn, or if salience might differ in a more statistically significant population base.

Now, we move to our sections that cover the data found in the ‘Prior’ and ‘After’ sections of the survey.

Table 2

Feelings and Experiences PRIOR to Passing of Bills

<b>Feeling or Experience</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Responses</b>
Suicidal thoughts and/or ideation	2.00	5.00	3.88	4.00	0.90	0.81	17.00
Depression	2.00	5.00	4.41	5.00	0.91	0.83	17.00
Feelings of hopelessness or the feeling that things won't get better	2.00	5.00	4.41	5.00	0.84	0.71	17.00
The need to move out from Florida to a different country or state	2.00	5.00	4.53	5.00	0.98	0.96	17.00
Discriminated against because of your gender identity	2.00	5.00	4.18	4.00	0.92	0.85	17.00
Ease of accessing healthcare pertaining to gender identity	1.00	4.00	1.82	2.00	0.92	0.85	17.00
Satisfaction with state governmental support of gender identity	1.00	3.00	1.12	1.00	0.47	0.22	17.00
Lack of support from family based on gender identity	1.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	1.57	2.47	17.00
Uncomfortableness using the bathroom of your preferred gender identity	1.00	5.00	4.18	5.00	1.10	1.20	17.00
Uncomfortableness in public because of your gender identity	1.00	5.00	4.24	4.00	1.00	1.00	17.00
Fear or concern of violence or harassment upon you because of your gender identity	3.00	5.00	4.53	5.00	0.70	0.48	17.00

Likert Scale: Strongly Disagree (1), Somewhat Disagree (2), Neither Agree nor Disagree (3), Somewhat Agree (4), Strongly Agree (5).

We will analyze the averages (or means) of both ‘Prior’ and ‘After’ sections using the Likert Scale range of 1.0-1.8 for ‘Strongly Disagree’, 1.81-2.6 for ‘Somewhat Disagree’, 2.61-3.4 for ‘Neither agree nor disagree’, 3.41-4.2 for ‘Somewhat Agree’, and finally, 4.21-5 for ‘Strongly Agree’. While there is controversy in using the mean of Likert scale data to analyze the data set, our sample being non-random and thereby a non-probably sample inhibits us from

doing proper statistical analysis to form our conclusions and prevents us from making our conclusions statistically significant (Sullivan & Artino, 2013). Therefore, analyzing the Likert scale means of the variables, while not the analytical norm, can provide useful data in percentage increase and trends between ‘Prior’ and ‘After’ sections for future researchers to verify or find differences in (Sullivan & Artino, 2013). As seen in Table 2, most averages in the ‘Prior’ section fall between 3-3.9, which indicates that on average, respondents felt either neutral on these experiences or feelings, or somewhat agree. Specifically, we see a movement towards ‘Somewhat Agree’ (3.41-4.2) on the variables of ‘Suicidal Thoughts’, ‘Uncomfortableness in Public’, ‘Fear or Concern of Violence’, ‘Depression’, ‘Feelings of Hopelessness’, ‘The Need to Move Out of Florida’, ‘Discrimination’, And ‘Uncomfortableness using the Bathroom of Preferred Gender Identity’. Since these are very typical experiences of transgender individuals, these averages seem in line with other surveys and data that show that these experiences or feelings occur regularly within the transgender population (James et al., 2024; The Trevor Project, 2023). Variables ‘Ease of Access to Healthcare’ and ‘Lack of Support from Family’ both fell in the neutral on average (2.61-3.4). Regarding the variable ‘Lack of Support from Family’, this falling in the neutral category would makes sense as, in some survey data regarding transgenders and family support- especially in youth, as we see with the Trevor Project’s 2023 Survey- is a somewhat mixed bag (The Trevor Project, 2023). This differs, however, from the findings of the previously mentioned USTS 2022, though, which saw 22% of all adult (18+) respondents falling into the ‘Neither Supportive nor Unsupportive’, and most respondents falling into the ‘Very Supportive’ and ‘Supportive’ categories of immediate family support (James et al., 2024). There is one variable that falls below ‘Neither Agree nor Disagree’, that being ‘Satisfaction with State

Governmental Support’. This could be explained by the lead-up to the bills passing, which if salience about the bills is/was high (as suggested by our previous data), could make transgender people upset or unsupportive of the state government at the baseline.

Table 3

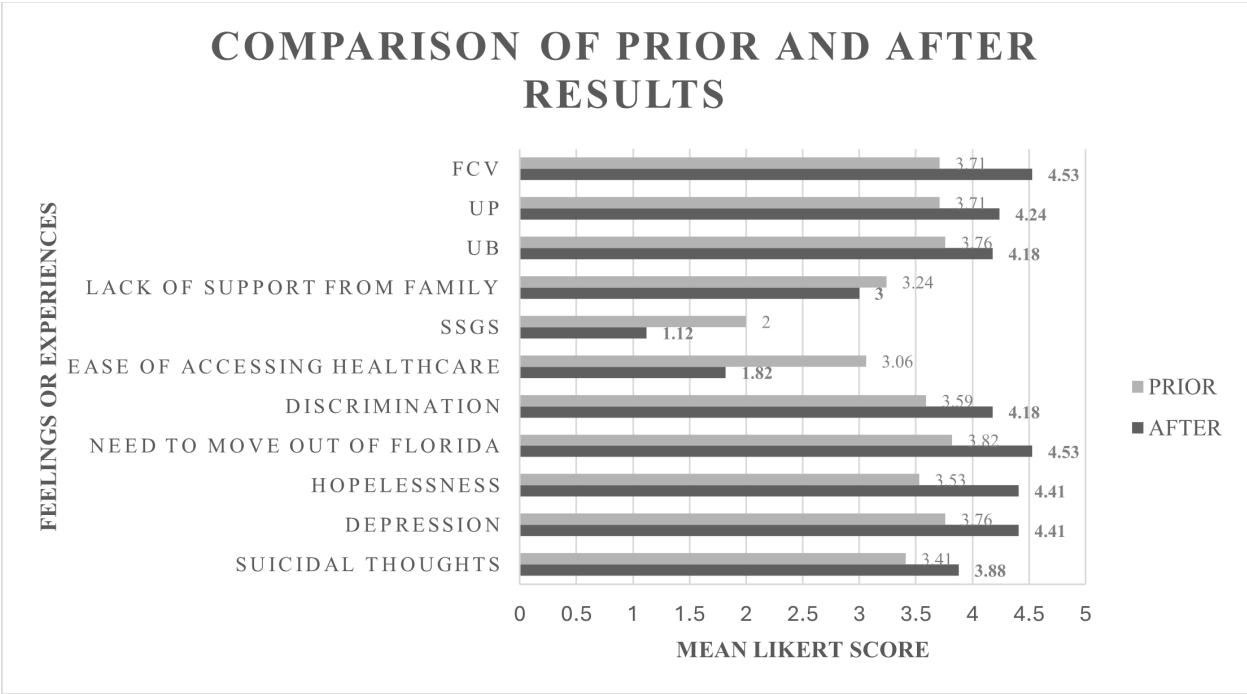
Feelings or Experiences AFTER Passing of Bills

<b>Feeling or Experience</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Responses</b>
Suicidal thoughts and/or ideation	2.00	5.00	3.88	4.00	0.90	0.81	17.00
Depression	2.00	5.00	4.41	5.00	0.91	0.83	17.00
Feelings of hopelessness or the feeling that things won't get better	2.00	5.00	4.41	5.00	0.84	0.71	17.00
The need to move out from Florida to a different country or state	2.00	5.00	4.53	5.00	0.98	0.96	17.00
Discriminated against because of your gender identity	2.00	5.00	4.18	4.00	0.92	0.85	17.00
Ease of accessing healthcare pertaining to gender identity	1.00	4.00	1.82	2.00	0.92	0.85	17.00
Satisfaction with state governmental support of gender identity	1.00	3.00	1.12	1.00	0.47	0.22	17.00
Lack of support from family based on gender identity	1.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	1.57	2.47	17.00
Uncomfortableness using the bathroom of your preferred gender identity	1.00	5.00	4.18	5.00	1.10	1.20	17.00
Uncomfortableness in public because of your gender identity	1.00	5.00	4.24	4.00	1.00	1.00	17.00
Fear or concern of violence or harassment upon you because of your gender identity	3.00	5.00	4.53	5.00	0.70	0.48	17.00

Likert Scale: Strongly Disagree (1), Somewhat Disagree (2), Neither Agree nor Disagree (3), Somewhat Agree (4), Strongly Agree (5).



As for feelings after the bills were passed, we see a large difference in averages, as per Table 3. Using the same scale as before (range of 1.0-1.8 for ‘Strongly Disagree’, 1.81-2.6 for ‘Somewhat Disagree’, 2.61-3.4 for ‘Neither agree nor disagree’, 3.41-4.2 for ‘Somewhat Agree’, and finally, 4.21-5 for ‘Strongly Agree’), we see shifts in most variables of feelings and experiences. For example, the ‘Suicidal Thoughts and/or Ideation’ variable, while previously averaged at 3.41, right at the cutoff point for ‘Somewhat Agree’, now is 3.88, and approximate 12% increase and a stronger indicator that respondents, on average, somewhat experienced thoughts of suicide. Two variables had substantial decreases, those being ‘Ease of Access to Healthcare’, and ‘Satisfaction with State Governmental Support’. In these variables, we saw large mean decreases of 68% in ‘Ease of Access to Healthcare’, and 79% in ‘Satisfaction with State Governmental Support’. Both decreases could be explained by, one, the actual passing of the bills (i.e., the bills made it through, and the Governor signed on them), and two, the fact that the passing of these bills directly change the way transgender people have access to healthcare. Other variables averaged in change between 10-20%, with the exception being the variable of ‘Lack of Support from Family’- which saw an 8% decrease from the ‘Prior’ results. This could be a result of possible changes in family opinion of gender identity because of the passing of the bills, but the average for both the ‘Prior’ and ‘After’ results still fall under the ‘Neither Agree nor Disagree’ category, which does fall in line with other surveys, as mentioned in the ‘Prior’ section.



**Figure 5: Comparison of Prior and After Results-** SSGS stands for ‘Satisfaction with State Governmental Support’, UB stands for ‘Uncomfortableness using Bathroom’, UP stands for ‘Uncomfortableness in Public’, and FCV stands for ‘Fear or Concern of Violence’. Total number represents average Likert Scale score for each variable.

The figure above, Figure 5, shows a comparison between the mean Likert scale scores for the ‘Prior’ section and the ‘After’ section. Many variables in the ‘Feelings and Experiences’ section saw an increased average Likert scale score, moving towards the ‘Somewhat Agree’ and ‘Strongly Agree’ categories. As mentioned previously, the only decreased averages (Moving toward ‘Somewhat Disagree’ to ‘Strongly Agree’) we saw are found in the variables ‘Satisfaction of State Governmental Support’ (-79%), ‘Ease of Accessing Healthcare’ (-68%), and ‘Lack of support from Family’ (-8%). All other factors increased from ‘Prior’ to ‘After’ on a scale of 10%-20%. The two largest Likert scale score average increases were found in the variable ‘Hopelessness’, which increased by 20% from ‘Prior’ to ‘After’ (moving from a previous average of ‘Somewhat Agree’ to an average of ‘Strongly Agree’),, and ‘Fear or Concern of

Violence’ (again, moving from a previous average of ‘Somewhat Agree’ to an average of ‘Strongly Agree’), which increased by 18% from the ‘Prior’ to ‘After’. Specifically, the enactment of legislation could make transgender adults in Florida feel less hopeful for the future of their rights in the state, and with a 16% increase in the Likert scale score average of the variable ‘Need to move away from Florida’ (moving from a previous average of ‘Somewhat Agree’ to an average of ‘Strongly Agree’), hopelessness might make transgender adults in Florida feel the need to move away from the state, regardless of the impact that might have to familial relationships, friendships, or ultimately the respondent’s mental health and quality of life. Additionally, our finding of the 16% increase of the ‘Need to move away from Florida’ variable (or an average of ‘Strongly Agree’ in our ‘After’ section) is similar to that of the USTS 2022, which found that 47% of respondents had ‘thought about moving to another state because their state government considered or passed laws that target transgender people for unequal treatment’, and also found that 5% of respondents moved out of state because of those laws (James et al., 2024). The increase of ‘Fear or Concern of Violence’ could be connected to the fact that, one, these bills could make those who already discriminate against transgender people feel more safe in doing so (as the state government, whether implicitly or explicitly, with the passing of the bills endorse such thinking and support an anti-transgender cause), leading to increased fear from transgender people, and two, the fact that our ‘Discrimination’ variable also increased from ‘Prior’ to ‘After’, which could affect perception of potential threats from the eyes of transgender people (i.e. more discrimination could be seen as more violence). On that note, our ‘Discrimination’ variable increasing could be explained in a similar way, with the passed bills promoting further discrimination as something that is ok, and could be experienced by

transgender individuals through healthcare discrimination (seen through SB 1580's acceptance of 'Conscience-based objections', as discussed previously), and through discrimination inside public restrooms that are owned and maintained by the state (as HB 1521's passing entails) (The Florida Senate, 2023a; The Florida Senate 2023b). We can also support this through increased in both of our 'Uncomfortableness' variables, both in public and in regards to public restrooms. These increases to the 'Uncomfortableness' factors are particularly important, as if transgender individuals in Florida feel uncomfortable living as their preferred gender identity whenever they are in public, or using public restrooms, they may choose to mask their identity at almost all times and avoid any type of gender affirming care, which could lead to serious impacts to their mental health overall (as they cannot properly treat their gender dysphoria through living as their preferred gender) (Anderson et al., 2022; Tordoff et al., 2022). Increases from the 'Prior' and 'After' sections were also seen in the following concerning variables: 'Depression' and 'Suicidal Ideation'. As these variables are particularly pertinent to the conversation of transgender adults (as they face these mental health disparities much more on average), there are extremely important to discuss (Carmel & Erickson-Schroth, 2016). These variables, and their increases, may be affecting the other; the 'Depression' variable's increase may impact 'Suicidal Ideation', and vice versa. The origin of both increases, besides one increasing the other, could be attributed to the fact that the bills ended up passing; there was backlash towards the passing of the bills and pushes to ultimately prevent them from passing, but these attempts failed, which could leave members of the Florida transgender community disillusioned, without hope (as we saw an increase to our 'Hopelessness' variable) or momentum to see positive change in the state regarding transgender issues. Additionally, the ensuing rules made by the bills could leave

transgender adults in Florida feeling powerless to change anything, leading to further depression, and possible suicidal thoughts. One of the variables we tested for, 'Ease of Accessing Healthcare', had an extremely large decrease, as mentioned previously, but could explain such a large increase in other variables. The decrease, most likely caused in large part due to the passing of bills SB 254 and SB 1580 (both of which effect the access of healthcare for transgender persons, as mentioned in the bills section), is quite alarming, as accessing healthcare, specifically that of gender affirming healthcare, is crucial when treating gender dysphoria (which improves mental health outcomes across the board) (Anderson et al., 2022). When the passing of such bills makes it much harder to receive healthcare, transgender adults may find too difficult and end up not getting any treatment whatsoever, whether its psychological counseling, gender affirming HRT, puberty blockers, or surgery- leading to negative mental health outcomes across the board. Overall, the increases to almost every negative health disparity faced by transgender adults following the passing of these bills is harrowing, and leads to some negative conclusions.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

Though we were not able to find a truly random sample of the population, and thereby a non-probability sample, our results necessitate future research. Specifically, the increases and decreases in certain mental health disparities and experiences that effect quality of life outcomes provide a troubling look into what the passing of anti-transgender legislation could do to already negative disparities that transgender people face, more-so than the cisgendered population. Nearly every category of negative mental health disparities and experiences that affect quality of life increased on a scale of 10-20%, with these increases signaling that our population of transgender adults in Florida became more depressed, felt more hopeless, had increased suicidal ideation, felt more uncomfortable both in using public restrooms and in public (in general), experienced increased discrimination, were more worried and fearful about violence being done to them, and had an increased need to move out of the state. Our sample was also increasingly unhappy with state governmental support regarding their gender identity and found that healthcare was much harder to access. This would suggest that, overall, transgender adult quality of life and overall mental health was negatively impacted following the passing of the bills within our sample. With these results in mind, we would be led to accept H1, which states that ‘There is an increase in mental health disparities and diminished quality of life outcomes following the passing of the bills’- even if our sample size wasn’t large enough to classify this relationship as statistically significant.

The future of these bills is currently uncertain. Though a lawsuit was established for Senate Bill 254 (the previously mentioned *Doe v. Ladapo*), it has yet to result in substantial change for transgender individuals living in Florida, and is still ongoing (GLAD, 2023). A recent

Supreme Court ruling on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, for a similar Idaho law that bans gender affirming care for minors sets a new precedent that these types of laws are constitutionally sound, which leaves the previously mentioned lawsuit in a tough spot (Parks & Marimow, 2024). While the Doe v. Ladapo did make strides, with classes being certified within the case, this Supreme Court ruling makes it harder for the families involved in the case to make arguments against the constitutionality of such bills. Other bills covered, House Bill 1521 and Senate Bill 1580, are still relatively unscathed, with House Bill 1521 being the only bill of the two to receive a significant lawsuit, and that ended with the plaintiffs voluntarily dismissing the case (Southern Legal Counsel, 2023). The current assessment of anti-transgender legislation is a bleak one, and without the backing of institutions like the Supreme Court, these types of bills might be here to stay for a substantial amount of time. However, the LGBTQ+ community in Florida is still rallying against such bills, and continue to support the transgender community, which could aid in the battle against anti-transgender legislation in the state of Florida and could aid in changes within the Florida legislature. The effectiveness of the LGBTQ+ community to protect Florida transgender individuals has been seen with the uproar associated with House Bill 1639: Gender and Biological Sex- a bill that was under scrutiny for not only requiring health insurance to cover conversion therapy, but also requiring for a person's sex, instead of gender, to be listed on licenses (Sasani, 2024; The Florida Senate, 2024). This resulted in a win for the Florida LGBTQ+ community when the bills ultimately died; nearly 20 anti-LGBTQ+ bills were introduced in the first quarter of 2024, including HB 1639, but only one single bill passed, that being HB 1291: Educator Preparation Programs, also known as the 'Stop WOKE Teacher Training' bill (Wolf, 2024). Ron DeSantis also signed a bill on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024, that limited book

challenges in school districts; this comes after DeSantis signed a bill less than a year ago enabling the act of book challenges, which became out of control for school districts, with Florida having the highest number of book bans than any other state during the 2023-2024 school year (Suarez et al., 2024). Many of the books that were banned during this time involved LGBTQ+ themes, especially themes about gender identities under the transgender spectrum (Suarez et al., 2024). DeSantis himself acknowledged that the 3,135 instances of book bans out of the 4,349 nationwide was too much (Suarez et al., 2024). The book banning limitation is another win for the LGBTQ+ community living in Florida, and a win that stops the erasure of transgender identities on bookshelves across the state. If the LGBTQ+ community can continue to rally together to stop these types of bills, the future of these bills doesn't seem as set in stone, even with the decisions of the Supreme Court in mind.

As for the question of why these bills were written and passed in the first place, there are multiple answers. As mentioned at the end of the history section, many of the same arguments and ideas are being used to form the basis for anti-transgender legislation today. This extends into the idea of the 'culture war', of which Antia Bryant is credited as starting in Florida during the 1970s (Eugenios, 2022). It wouldn't be until 1991 where we would see something very similar to the current 'culture war' sweeping the United States, one specifically started between secular liberals and religious conservatives, mainly fighting about things like abortion, lesbian and gay rights, and the separation of church and state (Alfonseca, 2023; Stanton, 2021). This fight, while still focused on things like abortion, has shifted away from the LGBTQ+ community at large, instead opting to focus on the transgender community inside it, since they have markedly less power than their lesbian, gay and bisexual counterparts. As stated previously, this



shift was mostly caused by a growing approval of LGBTQ+ acceptance (specifically that of gay marriage, lesbians, gays, and bisexuals overall), and most notably was sparked due to the rise (or more specifically, the increased salience or awareness of) of trans children playing sports; these events made social conservatives in the US feel pressured to respond in order to maintain relevance within the political sphere (Alfonseca, 2023; Gallup, 2019). As the president of the ‘American Principles Project’ (a socially conservative organization described as the ‘premier national organization engaging directly in campaigns and advocacy on behalf of the family’), Terry Schilling put it, ‘Family is the center of everything and we need a political party that’s going to put the family at the heart of it’ (Alfonseca, 2023; American Principals Project). This message reverberated throughout the Republican party and social conservatives across the United States, leading to now- the modern day ‘culture war’. These movements aim to stop the substantial progress the LGBTQ+ community in the US have made over the past decade and use similar fear-mongering strategies to that of Anita Bryant’s campaign against gays and lesbians in Florida. Topics involved in the culture war, like transgender legislation, are incredibly polarizing in the general voter base, and become a ‘make-or-break’ deal for Republicans when they head to their nearest polling station. In Florida, this pressure on Republican politicians in Florida to make a call on the ongoing ‘culture war’ debate has led to the creation, debate and passing of these 3 bills- with Governor Ron DeSantis being the figurehead using these issues for his political advantage, as passing these types of bills are now seen as favorable by his main voter base (Fineout, 2023). Speaking of political advantage, these moves also made sense for DeSantis in attempted path to the presidency. The passing of the 3 bills mentioned were followed by DeSantis’ announcement for his candidacy for the 2024 presidential election (Montenaro, 2023).

It can be inferred that DeSantis' passing of anti-transgender legislation right before the announcement of his presidential campaign is something that could've been used to garner publicity and support from the Republican voter base that may have preferred him over Trump; he gave Republicans a reason to vote for him with the enactment of very discriminatory transgender legislation. This was made clear with his campaign slogan, 'Make America Florida', touting his recent legislative accomplishments in abortion, taxes, and against the transgender community (Gomez, 2023). This strategy would end up failing, as he dropped out of the presidential race early in 2024, not gaining enough support to challenge Trump for the Republican ticket (Contorno & Maher, 2024). As long as the social conservative population in the US feels challenged by the increasing approval of the LGBTQ+ community, we will continue to see legislation and support for bills that continue to impact LGBTQ+ people, especially transgender individuals.

#### Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

There are a few key limitations to this exploratory research study. Firstly, we did not have the resources to secure a statistically significant enough population to make conclusions about the data we obtained. Many of the administrators of the UCF affiliated social media groups either did not respond or denied us because of the political nature of the survey itself. Additionally, since most of our respondents came from one sole source (because of the previously mentioned issue of difficulty of recruitment), and due to the small sample size, there is the potential for sampling bias, and our population that we tested may not be representative of the greater

transgender population in Florida. It makes our sample non-randomized, and thereby non-probability. We also lack better data that would be the result of having conducted this study before the bills were actually passed, so we could assess the true feelings and experiences of transgender adults in Florida, rather than having them recollect their experiences later- which leaves the current data questionable as to whether it is as accurate as it could be. Lack of funding and a team of individuals also holds this research back; with more funding and a bigger team, a replication of this study might be able to find a larger sample and thereby better, more statistically significant data and conclusions. There is also a heavy lack of previous research in the field of anti-transgender bills and their potential effects on transgender adults, especially in Florida, so there is not a lot of literature to draw off that could influence or change the way we collected data and developed our survey. For future research, offering more options when it comes to where respondents fall on the transgender spectrum might be better for both researchers and respondents, making it easier to fill out the survey (as we only included FTM and MTF as selectable options, with 'other' including everything else, where the respondent would have to fill out their own answer- which could lead to respondents feeling unrepresented and reluctant to continue the survey). Filling the options out with more identities commonly found under the spectrum (i.e., two-spirit, non-binary, and gender-nonconforming, etc.) would be better as we failed to include these options some respondents offered. Regarding our questions for the 'Feelings and Experiences' section our of questionnaire, something to note is that the USTS 2022 differentiated between immediate family and extended family, which we did not- future research studies using this exploratory research as a template should consider adding both categories to explore effects of the bills more efficiently and clearly (James et al., 2024). It is important to note

that, while our population wasn't high enough to draw statistically significant conclusions from, it can still be used as a comparison and a skeleton for future research data, which could be used to further the original goal of this exploratory study- to overall improve transgender mental health and quality of life outcomes through better policy decisions.

## References

- ACLU. (2023, May 2). *ACLU of Florida Condemns Passage of Bill that Enables Discrimination in Healthcare* | ACLU of Florida | We defend the civil rights and civil liberties of all people in Florida, by working through the legislature, the courts and in the streets. [Www.acluf.org. https://www.acluf.org/en/press-releases/aclu-florida-condemns-passage-bill-enables-discrimination-healthcare](https://www.acluf.org/en/press-releases/aclu-florida-condemns-passage-bill-enables-discrimination-healthcare)
- Alfonseca, K. (2023, July 7). *Culture wars: How identity became the center of politics in America*. ABC News. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/culture-wars-identity-center-politics-america/story?id=100768380>
- American Principals Project. (n.d.). *Home*. American Principles Project. Retrieved April 23, 2024, from <https://americanprinciplesproject.org>
- Anderson, B. (2022, October 20). *Promotional Products at Disney: The Story of the Orange Bird*. SAGE Blog. <https://www.sageworld.com/blog/index.php/2022/10/20/promotional-products-at-disney-the-story-of-the-orange-bird/>
- Anderson, D., Wijetunge, H., Moore, P., Provenzano, D., Li, N., Hasoon, J., Viswanath, O., Kaye, A. D., & Urits, I. (2022). Gender Dysphoria and Its Non-Surgical and Surgical Treatments. *Health Psychology Research, 10*(3). <https://doi.org/10.52965/001c.38358>
- Barbee, H., Deal, C., & Gonzales, G. (2021). Anti-Transgender Legislation—A Public Health Concern for Transgender Youth. *JAMA Pediatrics, 176*(2). <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2021.4483>

Brown, S. (2010). *Likert Scale Examples for Surveys*.

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/Documents/ANR/LikertScaleExamplesforSurveys.pdf>

Carmel, T. C., & Erickson-Schroth, L. (2016). Mental Health and the Transgender Population.

*Psychiatric Annals*, 46(6), 346–349. <https://doi.org/10.3928/00485713-20160419-02>

Cassanello, R., & Mills, L. (Directors). (2016, May 31). *The Committee*. WUCFTV.

<https://video.wucftv.org/video/committee-committee/>

Contorno, S., & Maher, K. (2024, January 21). *DeSantis ends 2024 presidential campaign and*

*endorses Trump*. CNN; CNN. [https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/21/politics/desantis-ends-](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/21/politics/desantis-ends-2024-)

[2024-](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/21/politics/desantis-ends-2024-campaign/index.html#:~:text=DeSantis%20ends%202024%20presidential%20campaign%20and%20endorses%20Trump&text=Florida%20Gov.)  
[campaign/index.html#:~:text=DeSantis%20ends%202024%20presidential%20campaign](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/21/politics/desantis-ends-2024-campaign/index.html#:~:text=DeSantis%20ends%202024%20presidential%20campaign%20and%20endorses%20Trump&text=Florida%20Gov.)  
[%20and%20endorses%20Trump&text=Florida%20Gov.](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/21/politics/desantis-ends-2024-campaign/index.html#:~:text=DeSantis%20ends%202024%20presidential%20campaign%20and%20endorses%20Trump&text=Florida%20Gov.)

Eugenios, J. (2022, April 13). *How 1970s Christian Crusader Anita Bryant Helped Spawn*

*Florida's LGBTQ Culture War*. NBC News. [https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/out-](https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/out-news/1970s-christian-crusader-anita-bryant-helped-spawn-floridas-lgbtq-cult-rcna24215)  
[news/1970s-christian-crusader-anita-bryant-helped-spawn-floridas-lgbtq-cult-rcna24215](https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/out-news/1970s-christian-crusader-anita-bryant-helped-spawn-floridas-lgbtq-cult-rcna24215)

Fetner, T. (2001). Working Anita Bryant: The Impact of Christian Anti-Gay Activism on

Lesbian and Gay Movement Claims. *Social Problems*, 48(3), 411–428.

<https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2001.48.3.411>

Fields, A. (2023, December 22). *ICYMI: Federal Trial Concludes in Challenge to the First State*

*Law Attempting to Deprive Transgender Adults of Healthcare, Florida's SB 254*. Human Rights Campaign. [https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/icymi-federal-trial-concludes-in-](https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/icymi-federal-trial-concludes-in-challenge-to-the-first-state-law-attempting-to-deprive-transgender-adults-of-healthcare-floridas-sb-254)  
[challenge-to-the-first-state-law-attempting-to-deprive-transgender-adults-of-healthcare-](https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/icymi-federal-trial-concludes-in-challenge-to-the-first-state-law-attempting-to-deprive-transgender-adults-of-healthcare-floridas-sb-254)  
[floridas-sb-254](https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/icymi-federal-trial-concludes-in-challenge-to-the-first-state-law-attempting-to-deprive-transgender-adults-of-healthcare-floridas-sb-254)

- Fineout, G. (2023, January 25). *A closer look at DeSantis' blowout win*. Politico.  
<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/florida-playbook/2023/01/25/a-closer-look-at-desantis-blowout-win-00079357>
- Florida Senate Regulatory Reform and Economic Development Subcommittee. (2023). *2023 Bill Summaries - The Florida Senate*. Www.flsenate.gov.  
<https://www.flsenate.gov/Committees/billssummaries/2023/html/3186>
- FRANK, G. (2013). "The Civil Rights of Parents": Race and Conservative Politics in Anita Bryant's Campaign against Gay Rights in 1970s Florida. *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 22(1), 126–160. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23322037>
- Gallup. (2019, May 29). *Gay and Lesbian Rights*. Gallup.com.  
<https://news.gallup.com/poll/1651/gay-lesbian-rights.aspx>
- GLAD. (2023). *Doe v. Ladapo*. GLAD. <https://www.glad.org/cases/doe-v-ladapo/>
- Gomez, H. (2023, May 22). *Ron DeSantis is learning that not every state wants to be Florida*. NBC News. <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2024-election/ron-desantis-learning-not-every-state-wants-florida-rcna85138>
- Haynes, S. (2020, December 22). *The Anti-Gay "Lavender Scare" Is Rarely Taught in Schools*. Time; TIme. <https://time.com/5922679/lavender-scare-history/>
- HRC Staff. (2023a, May 11). *BREAKING: Gov. DeSantis Signs Extreme "License to Discriminate" Healthcare Bill*. Human Rights Campaign. <https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/breaking-gov-desantis-signs-extreme-license-to-discriminate-healthcare-bill>
- HRC Staff. (2023b, May 17). *Gov. DeSantis Signs Slate of Extreme Anti-LGBTQ+ Bills, Enacting a Record-Shattering Number of Discriminatory Measures Into Law*. Human

- Rights Campaign. <https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/gov-desantis-signs-slate-of-extreme-anti-lgbtq-bills-enacting-a-record-shattering-number-of-discriminatory-measures-into-law>
- James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Durso, L. E., & Heng-Lehtinen, R. (2024). US Trans Survey 2022 Early Insights. In *Transequality.org*. [https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/2022%20USTS%20Early%20Insights%20Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/2022%20USTS%20Early%20Insights%20Report_FINAL.pdf)
- Johnson, E. (2019). Anita Bryant Leads a Moral Crusade. *Oxford University Press EBooks*, 38–67. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190618933.003.0003>
- Jones, R. (1959). Sodomy—Crime or Sin? *Florida Law Review*, 12(1), 83. <https://scholarship.law.ufl.edu/flr/vol12/iss1/5/>
- Joshi, A., Kale, S., Chandel, S., & Pal, D. (2015). Likert Scale: Explored and Explained. *British Journal of Applied Science & Technology*, 7(4), 396–403. <https://doi.org/10.9734/BJAST/2015/14975>
- Montenaro, D. (2023, May 24). *Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, top rival to Trump, jumps into the race for president*. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2023/05/24/1166796229/ron-densantis-president-election-2024>
- Murchison, G. R., Agénor, M., Reisner, S. L., & Watson, R. J. (2019). School Restroom and Locker Room Restrictions and Sexual Assault Risk Among Transgender Youth. *Pediatrics*, 143(6), e20182902. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2018-2902>
- Parks, C., & Marimow, A. E. (2024, April 15). Supreme Court allows Idaho to enforce ban on gender-affirming care for minors. *Washington Post*.



<https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2024/04/15/supreme-court-idaho-gender-affirming-care/>

Pew Research Center. (2019, May 14). *Majority of Public Favors Same-Sex Marriage, but Divisions Persist*. Pew Research Center - U.S. Politics & Policy.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2019/05/14/majority-of-public-favors-same-sex-marriage-but-divisions-persist/>

Pollard, J. (2024, February 18). *GOP candidates elevate anti-transgender messaging as a rallying call to Christian conservatives*. AP News. <https://apnews.com/article/lgbtq-transgender-republicans-trump-christian-conservatives-election-83becc009d8123d96a75c2e4940ab339>

Ron DeSantis Staff. (2023, May 17). *Governor Ron DeSantis Signs Sweeping Legislation to Protect the Innocence of Florida's Children*. Ron DeSantis 46th Governor of Florida. <https://www.flgov.com/2023/05/17/governor-ron-desantis-signs-sweeping-legislation-to-protect-the-innocence-of-floridas-children/>

Salas-Humara, C., Sequeira, G. M., Rossi, W., & Dhar, P. (2019). Gender affirming medical care of transgender youth. *Current Problems in Pediatric and Adolescent Health Care*, 49(9), 100683. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cppeds.2019.100683>

Sasani, A. (2024, February 28). *LGBTQ+ people protest in Florida over Republican conversion therapy bill*. The Guardian; The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/feb/28/lgbtq-florida-protest-conversion-therapy-bill>

Southern Legal Counsel. (2023, September 29). *Trans and Non-Binary Activists Challenge Florida Bathroom Ban as Unconstitutional Prior to National March*. Southern Legal

- Counsel. <https://www.southernlegal.org/news/trans-and-non-binary-activists-challenge-florida-bathroom-ban-as-unconstitutional-prior-to-national-march#:~:text=Florida%27s%20HB%201521%2C%20which%20forces>
- Spoto, M. (2023, March 24). *What transition-related health care is available to transgender kids in Texas? Here's what you should know*. The Texas Tribune. <http://www.texastribune.org/2023/03/24/texas-transgender-kids-transition-related-health-care/#:~:text=Physicians%20have%20been%20using%20puberty>
- Stanton, Z. (2021, May 20). *How the "Culture War" Could Break Democracy*. POLITICO. <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2021/05/20/culture-war-politics-2021-democracy-analysis-489900>
- Suarez, C., Royal, D., & Chavez, N. (2024, April 16). *Gov. Ron DeSantis signs education bill limiting book challenges | CNN Politics*. CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/16/politics/desantis-education-book-challenges-reaj/index.html>
- Sullivan, G. M., & Artino, A. R. (2013). Analyzing and Interpreting Data From Likert-Type Scales. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, 5(4), 541–542. <https://doi.org/10.4300/jgme-5-4-18>
- Terl, A. (2000). An Essay on the History of Lesbian and Gay Rights in Florida. *Nova Law Review*, 24(3), 793–854. <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/nlr/vol24/iss3/4>
- The Florida Senate. (2023a, May 12). *Senate Bill 1580 (2023) - The Florida Senate*. The Florida Senate. <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2023/1580>

- The Florida Senate. (2023b, May 18). *House Bill 1521 (2023) - The Florida Senate*. The Florida Senate. <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2023/1521>
- The Florida Senate. (2023c, May 18). *Senate Bill 254 (2023) - The Florida Senate*. The Florida Senate. <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2023/254>
- The Florida Senate. (2024, March 8). *House Bill 1639 (2024) - The Florida Senate*. Wwww.flsenate.gov. <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2024/1639>
- The Trevor Project. (2023). *2023 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ Young People*. <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2023/>
- Tordoff, D. M., Wanta, J. W., Collin, A., Stepney, C., Inwards-Breland, D. J., & Ahrens, K. (2022). Mental Health Outcomes in Transgender and Nonbinary Youths Receiving Gender-Affirming Care. *JAMA Network Open*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.0978>
- Turban, J. L., King, D., Kobe, J., Reisner, S. L., & Keuroghlian, A. S. (2022). Access to gender-affirming hormones during adolescence and mental health outcomes among transgender adults. *PLOS ONE*, 17(1), e0261039. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0261039>
- Wolf, B. (2024, March 8). *FLORIDA SINE DIE: LGBTQ+ and Allied Floridians Are Turning The Tide*. Human Rights Campaign. <https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/florida-sine-die-lgbtq-and-allied-floridians-are-turning-the-tide>