

SUMMER 2025

Advocates for Youth Congressional Digest



[ADVOCATES FOR YOUTH](#) partners with young people and their adult allies to champion youth rights to bodily autonomy and integrity, and to build power to transform policies, programs and systems to secure sexual health and equity for all youth. Our Youth Activist Network is currently 75,000 strong on 1,200 campuses and in tens of thousands of communities in the U.S. and more than 120 countries around the world.

Check out our [2024 annual report!](#)



Rights.
Respect.
Responsibility.

**Advocates
for Youth**
Young. Powerful. Taking Over.

Thank you for Championing Inclusive, Comprehensive Sex Education!

Advocates for Youth is proud to celebrate a successful Sex Ed for All Month and the reintroduction of H.R.3527/S.1910, the **Real Education and Access for Health Youth Act (REAHYA)**. The reintroduction of REAHYA is a significant step toward ensuring that all young people have access to comprehensive, medically accurate, and culturally responsive sex education. We are grateful to the Members of Congress who led this critical legislation, especially to primary sponsors Representative Alma Adams (D-CA) and Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), affirming their commitment to youth rights and reproductive justice. Thank you for championing sex education that reflects the needs of all young people.

Thank you for Defending the Dept of Education's Role in Protecting Survivors!

May was Sexual Assault Awareness Month, leaving Advocates for Youth grateful to the Members of Congress who stood up against efforts to dismantle the Department of Education's authority to enforce Title IX protections and address sexual violence in schools. Thank you for defending the federal responsibility to uphold Title IX, civil rights, and survivor protections.

Statement on National Youth HIV & AIDS Awareness Day



Thank you to Representative Mark Pocan and Senator Richard Blumenthal for introducing H.Res.331 / S.Res.171, Supporting the goals and ideals of "National Youth HIV/AIDS Awareness Day" on April 10th. "Thank you to Representative Pocan and the many champions in Congress who tirelessly highlight the ongoing challenges faced by young people living with HIV," said Debra Hauser, President of Advocates for Youth. "Young people must have access to comprehensive information and health care without barriers, stigma, or fear. We urge elected officials to step up and protect HIV prevention, treatment, and care for all."

See Advocates NYHAAD statement [here](#).

ADVOCATES FOR YOUTH'S ASKS

Defend the Department of Education

Trump and his Secretary of Education, Linda McMahon, are continuing to attempt to dismantle the Department of Education, despite this requiring Congressional action. To prevent Trump and McMahon from jeopardizing public education and students' civil rights across the country, we urge Members of Congress to continue to defend the Department of Education and its ability to protect and expand students' civil rights, voting against any attempts to dismantle the Department.

The Senate must VOTE NO on the Harmful Budget Bill

We are deeply disappointed and concerned over the House passage of H.R.1. This bill includes dangerous provisions that attack young people's access to healthcare and must be stopped. The Senate must protect gender affirming care, Planned Parenthood, Medicaid, and federal HIV/AIDS programs.

[Vote NO on H.R.1!](#)

We strongly oppose this bill, which serves as a harmful attack on the support systems that help provide access to services and care for the American public. The bill proposes devastating cuts to Medicaid, blocks federal funds to Planned Parenthood, and eliminates funding for HIV services and prevention.

Gender affirming care under Medicaid, Planned Parenthood health centers, and federal HIV programs are essential pillars of care for millions—especially young people, low-income communities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people of color. Young people—particularly young people of color—have been leaders in the movement to end the HIV epidemic and deserve continued access to inclusive prevention, education, and treatment. Congress must reject all attempts to defund these programs and instead protect and expand access to care for the communities who need it most. [Vote NO on H.R.1!](#)

SCOTUS WATCH

Braidwood Management v Becerra

In *Braidwood Management v. Becerra*, the Supreme Court will decide whether health insurance companies are required to provide the HIV prevention drug, PrEP, under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The ACA currently requires that insurers cover PrEP and other essential preventive services at no additional cost. If the Supreme Court chooses to impede affordable access to crucial preventative services, many young people across the country will be deterred from seeking necessary care. Furthermore, restricting access to PrEP in particular will disproportionately harm young LGBTQ+ people of color.

Mahmoud v Taylor

In *Mahmoud v. Taylor*, the Supreme Court will decide whether the religious rights of a group of Maryland parents were violated when their kids were not permitted to opt out of reading storybooks from an LGBTQ+ inclusive literacy curriculum. Depending on how the Court rules, this case could severely increase LGBTQ+ book bans and provide cover for discriminatory censorship in classrooms across the country. Research demonstrates that an LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum can both promote safety for all students and foster a culture of respect and understanding for young people questioning their identities.

United States v. Skrametti



In *United States v. Skrametti*, the Supreme Court ruled that the Tennessee law banning gender-affirming care for minors does not violate the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution. This landmark case has serious legal implications for the highly damaging series of gender-affirming care bans being passed and considered in state legislatures across the country. Gender-affirming care for minors is endorsed as essential treatment for transgender youth by every major medical, pediatric, and psychological association in the United States. Deprivation of this life-saving care will have catastrophic consequences for young people nationwide.

At a rally outside the Supreme Court during oral arguments for *US. vs Skrametti*, youth activist Jae Douglas (they/them/her), stated:

"No pen, no paper, and certainly no person could erase our existence. [...] To the trans youth of America, and to the trans youth of the world: you are stronger than what they say you are. You are limitless."

Advocates for Youth is greatly disappointed by the Court's decision, you can see our statement [here](#).

WHAT'S NEW

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Sexual Assault Awareness Month takes place annually during April. Throughout the month, youth activists with Know Your IX, a project of Advocates for Youth empowering students to end sexual and gender-based violence in schools, led a Sexual Assault Awareness Month training series. The series educated students, school staff, and advocates on a variety of topics – including how to organize to end sexual violence in schools, engage in state policy advocacy, set up peer to peer support networks, push back against misinformation about student survivors and LGBTQ youth, and advocate for policies that center marginalized survivors.



National HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NYHAAD) Recap

National Youth HIV & AIDS Awareness Day (NYHAAD), a project of Advocates for Youth, is observed annually on April 10th. During this year's week of action, we called on policymakers and the public to take urgent action to address the impact of HIV and AIDS on young people, while highlighting youth-led prevention, treatment, and care efforts across the U.S.



This year, nearly 60 youth activists were selected as NYHAAD Ambassadors, representing a diverse and powerful cohort:

- 61% organized in the South
- Close to 10% of Ambassadors are living with HIV
- 37% attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

Throughout the week, youth hosted impactful IG Live conversations that spotlighted the realities of HIV stigma—especially its impact on young Black Trans Women. They also created and shared bold social media content amplifying the goals of NYHAAD and the importance of youth leadership in ending the epidemic. Young leaders hosted drag shows and participated in a powerful visual panel that uplifted their experiences and visions for change.

The week began with the launch of the [NYHAAD Toolkit](#) and [#OurHIVPlan](#)—an agenda outlining youth demands to end HIV. Partners across our network helped expand the campaign's reach, making this year's NYHAAD one of the most visible and engaging to date.

1. The Right to Inclusive & Honest Education.

Young people have the right to inclusive and honest education to make informed decisions about our bodies and our lives. We demand sex ed that reflects our realities—including queer, trans, Black, Latine, and disabled youth—and gives us the tools to protect our health, our pleasure, and our futures.

2. The Right to Accessible HIV Prevention.

Young people have the right to condoms, HIV testing, and HIV prevention medication like PrEP and PEP—without judgment, cost, or barriers. We demand that all youth can access confidential, affordable, and youth-led sexual health services rooted in care, not stigma.

3. The Right to Quality & Accessible Treatment and Care.

We demand that all young people living with HIV have what they need to thrive and consistent access to the medication that keeps us healthy and undetectable. We deserve a real investment in systems that provide free, reliable, and youth-centered HIV treatment—because our lives and leadership are essential to ending this epidemic.

4. Freedom from HIV Stigma & Criminalization

Young people living with HIV deserve to live without criminalization. Laws that target people living with HIV are rooted in ignorance and uphold stigma. We demand an end to HIV criminalization and a shift toward real strategies—community care, access, and education—to end the epidemic.

7th Annual #MuslimAnd Week of Action

During the final week of Ramadan, Muslim Youth Leadership Council (MyLC) members across the country came together to host the 7th annual #MuslimAnd Week of Action, a celebration of the rich and diverse experiences of Muslim youth.



Through the week, MyLCers led powerful programming rooted in community, justice, and joy, including:

- Halaqas on organizing for Palestine, navigating safe and healthy sex and relationships, and how to talk about Ramadan
- Inclusive iftars centering queer and trans Muslims
- Tabling with #MuslimAnd resources on gender, sexuality, and faith
- Book clubs on inclusive media such as Hijab Butch Blues
- Know Your Rights outreach with international and immigrant students during Eid
- Campus coalition organizing to bring Muslim student voices into conversations opposing DEI rollbacks

In addition, nearly 50 Ramadan Community Care Kits were mailed nationwide to individuals seeking connection during the holy month—reminding Muslim youth they are seen, supported, and not alone. To close out the week, MyLC launched a new resource: [“Muslims do ‘it’ too”](#)—a sex-positive guide to safe and healthy sex and relationships tailored to Muslim youth. From spiritual reflection to political education to radical joy, #MuslimAnd Week reminded us of the power of Muslim youth organizing at every intersection of identity.

Advocates at the UN Commission on Population and Development

Advocates joined CHOICE for Youth to support a feminist youth space for young people attending the United Nations Commission on Population and Development (CPD). This included a social space, orientation to UNCPD, and a statement writing workshop among other offerings intended to strengthen a meaningful youth presence at the convening.

Advocates Participates in UNFPA's Strategic Plan Consultation

Advocates participated in the consultation on UNFPA's Strategic Plan for 2026–2029, alongside other civil society organizations and expert partners of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). During the meeting, we emphasized the need for explicit references to youth, stronger collaboration with and increased funding for youth-led and youth-serving organizations, and a sustained focus on adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights. We also underscored the importance of maintaining a rights-based approach and called on UNFPA to uphold and defend its core mandate, including abortion access, during these challenging times/ongoing global challenges.





Busybodies Club Launch

Advocates is proud to announce the launch of The Busybodies Club, a national campaign to educate young people on sexual health and reproductive rights topics. This PSA-style campaign works to fight common misconceptions, eliminate confusion, and debunk sex education information. **The Busybodies Club HQ** includes easy-to-understand, bite-sized knowledge to DEBUNK myths around sex education, reproductive health, LGBTQIA+ rights, abortion access, HIV Awareness, and racial justice. This campaign seeks to:

- “Pre-bunk” common misinformation about sexual and reproductive health topics
- Share accurate information about common sexual and reproductive health topics
- Elevate and rebrand the conversation about right-wing politicians perpetuating health misinformation

YOUTH HIGHLIGHTS

Violetta

YouthResource and ECHO member **Violetta** was recently honored by the County of Los Angeles and LA Children’s Hospital for her work in advocating for young people living with HIV and her organizing work within the Los Angeles Unified School District to ensure that trans youth are safe and protected.



Youth Advocate Agitate Program Council Member from Malawi, attended and led Advocates participation in the 69th Commission on the Status of Women.

Gertrude

She also wrote and shared a powerful [statement](#) to advocate for young people as a priority.

Jamellah

Jamellah, a member of CommuniTEA and YWOC, presented her HIV research at a FAMU symposium as part of the Scale It Up Florida initiative. Her team interviewed youth from the Florida State Youth Advisory Council (ages 18–29), highlighting barriers to PrEP and ART adherence—like mental health challenges, healthcare discrimination, side effects, and cost. Their findings will help shape future HIV prevention strategies and advocacy efforts.



Alonnie

Alonnie, a student organizer at Xavier University and member of CommuniTEA, led a two-year campaign for menstrual equity that resulted in the university installing free menstrual product dispensers campus-wide. Partnering with Beyond the Sheets and Aunt Flow, she organized workshops, tracked product data, and co-hosted a Period Poverty Block Party with fellow student Youma, drawing 200+ attendees and mobilizing support through student interviews and letter-writing.

KEY POLICIES & LEGISLATION

Advocates for Youth supports the following legislation:

- **The Right to Contraception Act (H.R.999 / S.422)**, sponsored by Representative Lizzie Fletcher and Senator Edward Markey. This act will protect the right to access and provide contraceptives, preempts restrictive laws, and allows legal action against violation. Please consider joining the current 204 co-sponsors in the House and 41 co-sponsors in the Senate.
- **The Washington D.C. Admissions Act (H.R.51 / S.51)** sponsored by Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton and Senator Chris Van Hollen. This act will provide a framework for transitioning Washington, D.C. to statehood, addressing representation, legal modifications, federal benefits, and administrative procedures, while establishing a Commission to oversee the transition. Please consider joining the current 191 co-sponsors in the House and 43 co-sponsors in the Senate.
- **The Global Health, Empowerment, and Right (Global HER) Act (H.R. 764 / S.280)** sponsored by Representative Lois Frankel and Senator Jeanne Shaheen. This bill will amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to ensure foreign NGOs are not disqualified from receiving U.S. assistance based on being funded by non-US sources and would permanently repeal the Global Gag Rule. Please consider joining the current 135 co-sponsors in the House and 42 co-sponsors in the Senate.
- **The Protecting Sensitive Locations Act (H.R. 1061 / S.455)** sponsored by Representative Adriano Espaillat and Senator Richard Blumenthal. This act will amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to restrict immigration enforcement at sensitive locations, requiring discretion and reporting. Please consider joining the current 77 co-sponsors in the House and 25 co-sponsors in the Senate.

- **The Safe Schools Improvement Act (H.R.1810 / S.986)**, sponsored by Representative Linda Sanchez and Senator Tim Kaine. This legislation would require local education agencies to adopt bullying prevention policies that enumerate protections on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex characteristics, disability, and religion. Please consider joining the current 97 co-sponsors in the House and 28 co-sponsors in the Senate.
- **The Do No Harm Act (H.R.1954 / S.894)** sponsored by Representative Bobby Scott and Senator Cory Booker. This bill would amend the Religious Freedom Restoration Act to prevent its application in cases where federal law protects against discrimination and harm. Please consider joining the current 106 co-sponsors in the House and 23 co-sponsors in the Senate.
- **The STOP Bullying Act (H.R.2682)** sponsored by Representative Raja Krishnamoorthi. This bill would establish a federal grant program to award grants for states to establish anti-bullying task forces that will convene educators and community leaders to evaluate and strengthen bullying prevention efforts in K-12 schools. Please consider joining the current 13 co-sponsors in the House.
- **The UNFPA Funding Act (H.R.2439)** sponsored by Representative Chrissy Houlahan. This bill restores funding for the United Nations Population Fund, a UN agency which works in over 150 countries to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights. This bill was reintroduced to combat the Trump administration's attacks on the UNFPA and other foreign aid programs. Please consider joining the current 48 co-sponsors in the House.
- **The Equality Act (H.R.15 / S.1503)** sponsored by Representative Mark Takano and Senator Jeff Merkley. This bill is an amendment to the Civil Rights Act to include "gender identity and sexual orientation" to nondiscrimination protections. Nondiscrimination protections would impact public spaces and services, federally funded programs, housing, education, and more. Please consider joining the current 213 co-sponsors in the House and 46 co-sponsors in the Senate.
- **The Real Education and Access for Healthy Youth Act (H.R.3527 / S.1910)** sponsored by Representative Alma Adams and Senator Cory Booker. This bill would invest in comprehensive, evidence-based sex education that supports the identities and autonomy of all youth, particularly LGBTQ+ youth of color, disabled youth, and immigrant youth. Please consider joining the current 17 co-sponsors in the House and 6 co-sponsors in the Senate.
- **The Transgender Healthcare Access Act (H.R.2487)** sponsored by Representative Becca Balint. This bill would expand the healthcare infrastructure for and overall access to gender-affirming care. Its provisions accomplish this by training more providers (including those in rural communities), improving the medical education curricula, expanding the capacity of Community Health Centers, and more. Please consider joining the current 39 co-sponsors in the House.