

## #1426 The Liberation and Assimilation of Pride Month

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** [00:00:00] Welcome to this episode of the award-winning *Best of the Left Podcast*, in which we shall take a look at the mainstreaming of Pride in recent decades and what that is doing to the liberatory origins of the Pride movement. Corporatization and pinkwashing highlight the wide but shallow support for LGBTQ liberation, while debate over inclusion of LGBTQ police marching in uniform highlight the remaining oppressions that are still ignored by large swaths of the more mainstream friendly LGBTQ community.

Clips today are from *Hysteria*, *PFLAG National*, *Past Present*, *It's Been a Minute with Sam Sanders*, *The Takeaway*, *MSNBC*, *The BradCast*, and the *PBS NewsHour*.

### Are Corporations Taking Advantage of Pride - Hysteria - Air Date 6-17-21

**ERIN RYAN - CO-HOST, HYSTERIA:** [00:00:46] We're going to talk a little bit about the corporate colonization of important social causes, and I want to draw a quick distinction. I don't think that it's wrong for any corporation to sound off about any issue. We're talking specifically about the point at which it goes from being, "Oh, cool, a bunch of people who work for this company are trying to put something out there that's positive in the world," and, "these people are just full of shit." Cause there is a line. So I want to talk about something called pinkwashing, which actually has two meanings, I want to talk about something called greenwashing, which is like pinkwashing but about the environment, and just the feminism incorporating that happened with other issues as well.

So greenwashing is the original cause-marketing term. I learned this yesterday, as I was doing research on this, greenwashing was coined by an environmentalist who wrote an essay in 1986 about the hotel industry. So when you go to a hotel and they have that little placard that's "we're saving the environment. Don't wash your towels." In 1986, we knew that was crap. The hotels that put those things in rooms are making little to no effort to actually reducing energy waste, and in a lot of cases they're just trying to not have to pay people to do work. They're not trying to really reduce energy consumption. It means that the hotels are trying to get credit for being environmentally savvy without actually doing anything.

Pinkwashing is a term that was invented in 2011 in reference to Israel trying to promote itself as a bastion of gay rights in the Middle East, while it was violating the human rights of Palestinians. Now, things like pinkwashing mean anytime a corporation uses, "Hey, we like gay people, everything's great!" while doing things that are actively harmful to members of marginalized communities. So that's just a little bit of a basis of what we're talking about.

Tien, I'm going to start with you today. I have noticed this year especially, that there has been a lot of backlash against corporate involvement in Pride. I just would love to hear what your experience has been with corporate Pride meddling and how you feel about the whole thing.

**TIEN TRAN:** [00:02:57] I find it to be deeply obnoxious, only because there is so much pinkwashing. I think there was a meme that was going around that all of these corporations

like AT&T, Verizon, CVS had changed their logos to be rainbows, and I love thinking about the graphic design person who's not being paid enough to lay out the rainbow in a Comcast logo.

But then they also on the backend are donating money, like tons of money, to anti-LGBTQ politicians. So to me, it's just, it's such a gross level of virtue signaling that we should continue to call out. Cause you can't, you shouldn't get to have it both ways. You shouldn't get to feel good about a positive message when you're actively harming folks in secret, which makes it even gross.

**ERIN RYAN - CO-HOST, HYSTERIA:** [00:03:48] Alyssa, you and I have discussed this. You and I were both working in and adjacent to "women's media" during a time when feminism was turning from something that entailed advocacy for specific policies into something that was a little bit more like a fashionable label, and I would love to hear your thoughts on why you think that marketers and corporations do this over and over again, for things from feminism to LGBTQ rights to Black Lives Matter? What do you think is behind it?

**ALYSSA MASTROMONACO - CO-HOST, HYSTERIA:** [00:04:23] Erin, I'm going to say money. Here's the thing, is that it all changes with the more, as Shaniqua was saying, the more disposable income certain groups of people have, the more they are targeted for, "It's okay Alyssa, you're making more money than you did when you were in the government. How do you want to express your purchasing? How do you want to express yourself through purchasing?" And I think that's what it comes down to. And for me, look, I am a basic bitch when it comes to this stuff. Do I get targeted? Yes. Do I buy into it sometimes? Sure I do. Okay. I'm not going to fucking pretend I'm better than I am. And the thing though, for me, is for these companies, my question is always, if you're going to make a pussy hat, who does the money from the pussy hat go to? If it's just going to you ... This is where I think that companies, I want to meet all the people that get paid a lot of money for corporate social responsibility, because literally I could do all of your jobs in five minutes.

It's if you are making money on a sweater that you put a rainbow on and it says, "love is love", are you taking all the money for yourself, this love is love sweatshirt, or you sending it, maybe... If I were a company that wanted to make Pride sweaters and show that I supported the community, I would say that all proceeds are going to go to helping fund the Pulse Memorial down in Florida.

I would find ways to say, look, okay, I'm a fucking capitalist pig sure, but I'm going to try and lead by example here and show that you can be a capitalist pig but you can also, when you want to truly support an issue at least overtly, corporate policies for how you treat your employees, all of that stuff, let's put that aside and just talk about the actual capitalism of it all, that, to me, it's such low hanging fruit that it is shocking when they miss the opportunity to at least do something that is materially beneficial to the people they're purporting to support and then, and themselves.

Everybody knows all of, because of Facebook and all those other fucking people, they all know how much money we make. They know how we spend our money. They know where we spend our money. They target us, at least, if you've got us, so just do something that is actually going to make at least a small, small, real difference.

**SHANIQUA MCCLENDON:** [00:06:41] I would just add in that they do it just fucks over the people they claim to love. Like they literally take our money and go give it to these bad

politicians to pass these awful laws and it's just like the slap in the face. I'd actually rather them just keep it to themselves if they're not going to do something good with it, but just to pour salt in the wound.

**TIEN TRAN:** [00:06:59] I think the other thing that is frustrating too, is that when these corporations do enter into talking about social movements, it's always the most palatable or safe version of it. It's the very entry level, how can we be the least offensive, when it's, as you dig deeper, specifically with Pride for example, we have more anti-trans bills trying to be passed throughout the country in history, more than ever. And these corporations have the power to make a statement and try to push back, and they're not because that's the harder issue of the LGBTQ community that they don't want to touch because it's too controversial. But what is nice is long-haired lesbians in commercials, that's fine. That's what's also very frustrating, is that they enter into the conversation at the tip of the iceberg level.

**ERIN RYAN - CO-HOST, HYSTERIA:** [00:07:50] There are all these things within companies, I think, that are some times lacking in the way they treat their own employees. It's not just where the money is going, it's their own employees are not doing very well. Alyssa, do you think that cause-marketing has reached a tipping point where it seems like everyone is annoyed with it this year? Why do you think that is? Do you think it's a generational thing, do you think Gen Z is over it where Millennials were, "yeah, we love cause-marketing!" What do you think is behind that?

**ALYSSA MASTROMONACO - CO-HOST, HYSTERIA:** [00:08:16] I think for Millennials, cause-marketing was new, and so I think there was an assumption that there was a lot more meaning behind it. That these companies were doing it because they felt it, that it was more than just marketing, that it was an ethos. And I think that people have realized that's not the case. I think people have drawers full of shirts with slogans and sayings on them for causes that haven't made a lot of progress since aforementioned t-shirts were purchased.

So I think that now, it's just, it's like everyone realizes it's not on the level. It's, "Okay, great. They've made their shirts with rainbows. They have their pink pussy hats. They have all these things. They have Black Lives Matter t-shirts, and yet, how they run the companies hasn't changed, how they treat their employees hasn't changed, the world hasn't changed that much." So I think people are like, "Excuse me, I'm going to save my money for a nap dress."

## **Pride - PFLAG National What Makes Pride - Air Date 6-1-21**

**MELISSA HARRIS-PERRY - HOST, WHAT MAKES PRIDE:** [00:09:09] So, on the one hand, I want to say, a parade can still have that kind of politicizing value; that, to the extent that shame is supposed to cause you to exit the public sphere, then we could still see simply announcing, right, one's existence, and one's right to exist as constituting, a kind of political act.

So I'm interested in whether it's... if it's really about the sort of focus away from policy, or if it's about this kind of corporate economic, (I loved the way you talked about it), markets, and then also the policing. So let me then hand it back to you.

**JAY WALKER:** [00:09:46] Sure. It's a combination of all of those factors. We have this simultaneous shift happening in the city, around LGBTQ people and around the way that the March was received by the general public, and the way that the city government interacted with the March.

And as the March became more, more popular, more, more societally acceptable, more, more covered in the national media, more politicians started marching. And, of course, they wanted to March in the FRONT of the March. And so they began to have this level of primacy.

Then you had the police who were having their own issues with gay police officers experiencing discrimination on the job. They formed the Gay Officers Action League, which was really heretical at that time, for the police force. And so then it became about having the Gay Officers Action League march in this.

Somewhere along the line, the police marching band ended up in the parade. And that's where it became a little bit too difficult.

And, in addition to that, during the Giuliani administration, we had, the... the bike rack barricades became a huge problem with the parade, meaning that the entire length of the parade was barricaded off along the sidewalk, along the curb line, meaning that off the sidewalks and into the streets,...

**MELISSA HARRIS-PERRY - HOST, WHAT MAKES PRIDE:** [00:11:08] It couldn't happen anymore. If you've got police building barricades there, then you actually can't get off the sidewalk and into the streets.

So I can hear... I'm a southerner. I can hear a crew of folks, who are in my community, who I love, saying, "What is it that he wants? Do you want to be accepted or not accepted? What is the goal, then, of pride now?"

I bet I have some answers, but I want to hear from you. Why would it be a problem to discover that you've got politicians in the front, the police marching band come on along by?

**JAY WALKER:** [00:11:46] Those things in and of themselves would not be a huge issue if those politicians weren't caving to special interests that were oriented against the parade. For instance, year... For years, the... the parades have lots of different routes over the years, but for a significant amount of time, it marched from the upper Fifties on Fifth Avenue, down Fifth Avenue, and into Washington, into, down to the village.

But a problem with that, was that, during the HIV-AIDS crisis, that March was going past St. Patrick's Cathedral, which is the, sort of, living embodiment of the Catholic Church in New York City.

And so, what we ended up having was, for a... for a while after the AIDS March started doing actions in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral, and on the steps of St. Patrick's Cathedral, during the March, we suddenly had the elected officials deciding, "Okay I'm going to join at 46th Street."

At the

**MELISSA HARRIS-PERRY - HOST, WHAT MAKES PRIDE:** [00:12:44] Cathedral !

"I'm going to

**JAY WALKER:** [00:12:46] join AFTER the

**MELISSA HARRIS-PERRY - HOST, WHAT MAKES PRIDE:** [00:12:47] Cathedral."

Oh, so that, "I don't have to walk past the House of the Lord with queer folk."

**JAY WALKER:** [00:12:53] But I won't be associated with whatever those AIDS activists, what Act Up or... are going to do in front of the Cathedral.

And so we have, we had that aspect of it, but then our Black and Brown queer and trans bodies were continuing to be policed, even though we were decades after Stonewall.

And so this, just kept getting greater and greater. The corporate presence kept getting larger and larger. The city began to dictate, and the police department specifically, began to dictate the route of the Heritage of Pride Parade, which is the tradition.

So, that route kept getting smaller and smaller, until in 2019, or, rather, in 2018, it was literally this tiny little horseshoe going from the... going from Chelsea to the Flat Iron.

So literally limiting itself to, two, three neighborhoods. Whereas before it had gone in this wide swath through Manhattan, to show that we are everywhere. And they just constrained it, and constrained it, because they didn't want to deploy all of the people needed to... to have a large March.

**MELISSA HARRIS-PERRY - HOST, WHAT MAKES PRIDE:** [00:13:57] So, what I love about the story, you've just told, is that it represents in this space, in this moment, in this one set of actions, actually something that is symbolic of the broader movement; that rather than massive resistance, what authorities bring instead is a, kind of, co-optation a marketing, a constraint, right?

And so there's still this need for reclamation from that, because that kind of co-optation does not in and of itself constitute liberation.

So what I want you to do for me, is, set the table a bit on the most critical issues facing queer and trans communities, and particularly at that intersection of racialized, marginalized identity, or immigration status...

You had Act Up at the center, right? In the story you're telling about the beginnings... what are the core issues now?

**JAY WALKER:** [00:14:55] There are so many, because we are everyone. And everyone is us. And if there's one thing that we have... that our communities have embraced over the course of the last four years, is this sort of intersectionality in the way that activism functions now.

It's the kind of the way that activism functioned in the 1970s, right? After that period of Stonewall, and Black liberation, and Black Power. And, the folks from the Gay Liberation Front, after Stonewall, partnered with the Black Panthers and demonstrated outside the

women's prison where Angela Davis was being held. It was about marginalized people coming together.

And then sometime, in the late seventies, to the eighties, to the nineties, we all got torn asunder. And you had everyone siloed, and all, everyone... the environmentalist were over here, the gays were over here, the Blacks... people were over here, the Latinex people were over there.

And then suddenly in 2016, 2017, we all had a common enemy again. We all had the living embodiment of The Man...

**MELISSA HARRIS-PERRY - HOST, WHAT MAKES PRIDE:** [00:16:06] ...bringing together people.

**JAY WALKER:** [00:16:08] Bringing people together all over the place! All over the world!

And from that, that, that resistance, I think that a lot of the queer movements reengaged with the wider population, with the wider identities, and that's what the Queer Liberation March has been about.

It's been about... it's been about disability rights, it's been about immigration rights, it's about trans rights, and trans rights... the way they are affected by the state, and trans rights and the way that they are affected by the community.

We talk about deadbeat dads all the time, not, not paying for their kids' expenses. What about the deadbeat parents that kick their queer and trans kids out of the house, when they're under age? Nothing exists to help those kids.

The carceral system, especially in relation to trans people, is a huge problem, just with mis-gendering, with with housing people inappropriately, with the incidents of people being put into solitary confinement because the police corrections officials don't know what to do.

We're also dealing with immigration issues, and queer and trans... transnational relationships, where for the last four years, prior to the current administration, they simply were not recognized.

There are just a host of issues and some of them are specifically about being queer, and trans, and some of them are about being Black, and the way that being queer or trans amplifies the racism that Black people are feeling, or being Latinex, or being indigenous, and the way that, that things get ratcheted up because queerness and transness are a part of the story.

So it's a wide variety of issues.

## **The History of LGBTQ+ Pride Part 1 - Past Present - Air Date 6-15-21**

**NICOLE HEMMER - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT:** [00:17:38] Reform and revolution, divide was present at Stonewall in 1969. The Mattachine Society, which had been working very much in this respectability politics frame for, at that point, had placed a sign at the Stonewall Inn that

told people to protest peacefully and to not fight with the police. And it was the exact wrong message for that moment. They were in a revolutionary moment. And by calling for this kind of peaceable, reformatory spirit, they were seen as standing in the way of gay liberation.

Now, a year later, they would be part of the Pride gathering that marked the one year anniversary of Stonewall. So they are brought back into the movement. But in that moment that serves now as the foundational moment of Pride, it was Mattachine that was calling for something a lot softer than what many of the people there wanted.

**NEIL YOUNG - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT:** [00:18:37] Yeah. And I think that all of this is useful for just to the extent we can in the limited time here, speaking to the broad diversity within this community, within this movement, and the competing tensions that run through it. And I think that sort of like history of respectability politics that you're talking about, Nicki, with the Mattachine Society and the real emphasis on clean cut appearances and on a sort of assimilationist ethic, right? Like that what most of them wanted was an American society that would just incorporate them and would stop discriminating and harassing, but wasn't seeking revolution. And that's not what a lot of the trans activists who were at Stonewall, that's not their goal, their mission. They know that's not a possibility.

And so that sort of, again, that reform/revolution tension has been there all along. I think the language of reform and certainly the sort of discourse or the self-conception that certain persons might be internal agents of reform. So in this example, the history of queer cops and the ways in which they've defended themselves and even thought of themselves as again, internal agents of reform of this institution, it reminds me a lot of the arguments gay Republicans have made through the decades, right? Like, why are you in this political party that wants to criminalize everything you do, that wants to deny you all your rights. They've argued over and over again through the decades, well we are the internal agents of reform here, we're going to change the party from within. But I do think is particularly interesting is that language of reform has dramatically dropped away from gay Republicans in recent years.

I think in the Trump years, that sort of reform language just wasn't like an animating discourse among those gay Republicans. You'll have to read the book to hear more about that.

I don't want to get too far afield here, but to talk about the ways in which this language is used by a lot of different queer actors for a lot of different purposes, more broadly.

**NICOLE HEMMER - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT:** [00:20:32] I want to pick up on that assimilationist language, because it was such an important part of the early debates over same-sex marriage and marriage equality. And I feel like it dropped out as marriage equality became this more broad-based goal and as it became a garnered, more popular mainstream support, and then of course it became the law of the land in 2015.

But that the idea of gay marriage was seen by some activists as assimilationist, as fundamentally conservative. And in some ways, Andrew Sullivan, who was one of the early advocates of the same sex marriage, was making a conservative assimilationist argument and was arguing in those terms very explicitly, which really does drop out of at least the mainstream conversation around marriage equality at a certain point.

But those tensions were very, very hot in the mid 1990s as that conversation was unfolding.

**NEIL YOUNG - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT:** [00:21:35] That's right. And you can understand, and in some ways I think, what Sullivan was doing with and making a very conservative argument for the expansion of marriage, right? One that's affirming the kind of conservative elements of the institution. That's just good shrewd political strategy. Right? And also, I think you can think let's think about Sullivan's larger politics here. And maybe this isn't only just like shrewd strategic tactics.

I do think another kind of interesting component, and this ties back into the questions we're raising about the month of Pride is, does the politics of the movement, or rather, how does the legalization of same-sex marriage change the politics of the movement? Because a big criticism within the community has been that gay white men who have been the sort of public face of gay politics, even if they haven't really been the driving actors, that a lot of their political involvement and energy has dropped away remarkably in the year since the legalization of same-sex marriage and a sort of sense of we got what we wanted, full equality has been achieved. All right. We're Americans now, end of discussion. And the larger community's ongoing insistence that there are lots of political fights to continue to take up, that is not widely felt or are rather, there's a real disagreement about what the political urgencies of the moment are and what they will be.

**NATALIE MEHLMAN PETRZELA - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT:** [00:23:00] Yeah. And I think particularly as those other fights are not only not linked to gaining access to as bedrock a conservative institution as marriage, but also are connected to linking up with other very progressive causes. Whether it is defund the police or decolonization and Israel/Palestine.

And I think that, plus let's not forget the adding of the letters, we're saying LGBTQIA, like with all of those letters, you have a more sort of umbrella inclusivity in a way, but you also have a kind of like attention to a diversity of identity, which I think can contribute to some of the splintering that you're talking about beyond just white gay men and everybody else, but among that everybody else.

**NICOLE HEMMER - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT:** [00:23:47] I am curious about that argument. I think it's certainly true that cis white gay men have been the face of the movement. And is that Natalie's talking about issues outside of sexual identity more broadly, but what about something like The Equality Act? Is it because the cis gay white men who are the face of the movement are also middle and upper-class and so less likely to face the kind of employment discrimination that something like The Equality Act is addressing?

**NEIL YOUNG - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT:** [00:24:14] Yeah. And I think that's even more true when we look at things like access to health care, about housing issues, those sorts of issues that I think a lot of, as you say, white gay men don't have a personal connection to. I think given that a lot of white gay men don't feel connected to those particular issues, it's not surprising that there's been less engagement, less activism around those issues from them. And certainly, white gay men are not the only people that are part of this community. And again, I would say that they have not been the driving actors of the political movement of the last several decades. However, I do think that they have been the public profile, the public face of it, that the media has looked to over and over again. And to that extent that the media helps us frame the urgencies of politics, it's important if they aren't fully invested in those issues.

## Kink, Cops And Corporations At Pride - It's Been a Minute with Sam Sanders - Air Date 6-4-21

**ROXANE GAY:** [00:25:03] My argument was simply that we have to do something to just say, no; no cops at Pride. That said, if you're a cop, if that's your life choice and you want to march at Pride, you're welcome to do so.

**SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN AM INUTE WITH SAM SANDERS:** [00:25:16] Do you know, it's impossible to have this conversation without talking about the history of Pride itself. And I know for some listeners, they know this history very well. But for those who might not, I think it's important to remind them that the first Pride march was to mark the anniversary of a rebellion and a riot that was a resistance to police brutality against queer people. And when you know that history, it makes the presence of police at Pride, period, symbolize a lot more.

**ROXANE GAY:** [00:25:54] It does. It symbolizes an endorsement of police and a welcoming. And police are not welcome until they get themselves together and can police without brutality, until they can reform themselves, which frankly they can't. So until they abolish themselves, they're not welcome at Pride. And I don't think that's an unreasonable line to take given everything that they have done to us.

**SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN AM INUTE WITH SAM SANDERS:** [00:26:20] I mean since the start of queer people, there has been a response from the states and from police to queerness.

**UNKNOWN:** [00:26:29] During the year of 1964, we arrested 3000 homosexuals. And I am opposed as a matter of principle to making anything which is improper or immoral conspicuous.

**SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN AM INUTE WITH SAM SANDERS:** [00:26:43] Criminalizing queer sexual behavior, over-patrolling queer spaces. The folks at Stonewall were antagonized by police for a while before they pushed back and had that first riot.

But I think a lot of folks might say Pride has morphed into something very different since then. And the relationship between a lot of queer people and the police has become different as well.

Pride for me, you and I go now, it's full of corporate sponsors. It's full of straight parents bringing their kids. It feels a lot more like a block party or a parade in many cities, no longer an uprising or a riot. Does the change in experience of Pride itself also maybe change who gets to be included, because it's different now? You know what I'm saying?

**ROXANE GAY:** [00:27:35] Yes, and no. Clearly Pride has become something of a mass cultural celebration, and frankly, I'm ambivalent about that. I think that sometimes we yearn for mainstream approval too much. And this sort of "everyone's welcome at Pride" dilutes what Pride was about and who Pride is for. And we see it in a lot of the ancillary discussions about who belongs at Pride, especially when it comes to suggesting that people in kinky communities should tone it down for Pride.

I love kids. And I think it's wonderful that children attend. And I also think it's wonderful that our children appear at Pride so that they know this is who we are, this is our community. You are never going to be alone. And if straight people want to come with their families, that's fine.

But sometimes it has the feel that they don't even understand what they're celebrating. They just want to be at something that's bright and colorful and exuberant. So I question that.

**SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN AN INUTE WITH SAM SANDERS:** [00:28:34] I also find that when we get into these arguments about "what should the kids that come see your Nazi?" It feels as if it is giving the power of decision-making about what is acceptable or not to people who Pride wasn't even originally for.

**ROXANE GAY:** [00:28:51] I mean, that's exactly the problem. It seems like straight people and corporations have taken over Pride. Like people now say "Happy Pride," which on the one hand I am thrilled that Pride has become so embedded in our culture that it is now like an actual sort of month long holiday. That's incredible.

But. I don't need to see Budweiser cans, like that are colored like the rainbow and things like that.

**SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN AN INUTE WITH SAM SANDERS:** [00:29:19] Well, and like this seems to be the existential debate about the gay rights, the queer rights movement. Is it about us doing us, whatever those other folks do? Or is it about us becoming palatable to the mainstream?

I do want to go back to kink though, because on top of this debate about whether police should be allowed at Pride or not, there's also a debate online about whether kinksters and leather folks should be allowed at Pride. And that, for me, that seems like an even easier question to answer. And the answer: of course, because they've always been there! But I want you to talk about your thoughts on this debate and why it seems to be really hot as well this year.

**ROXANE GAY:** [00:30:01] I think because Pride is becoming more mainstream, and people are recognizing that we're gaining mass cultural sanction, nobody wants to threaten that. We don't want to threaten sort of the approval that we're currently getting. And so now a lot of queers are like, we are going to be on our best behavior by any means necessary. And it is sad.

**SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN AN INUTE WITH SAM SANDERS:** [00:30:29] It's tiring.

**ROXANE GAY:** [00:30:30] Yeah, exactly. It's tiring. And the idea that we should remove the sex from our sexuality is offensive. It's almost like a lot of times when women talk about birth control, they're like, oh, I'm on birth control to regulate my period. Like girl, I'm on birth control because I like to have sex myself. I'm not speaking for myself. My birth control is flawless and it's called being a lesbian or I guess bisexual, I'm married to a woman and it works every time I swear. But my wife has yet to get me pregnant, though we've tried.

Anyway, I think we see a similar thing happening in the gay community where like it's the *Will and Grace* effect, where we're cute and charming and harmless, but we don't actually have sex. And that's not true, for most of us.

**SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN AM INUTE WITH SAM SANDERS:** [00:31:16] And it's also not historical, because all of this, Stonewall itself, the start of Pride itself, all of these things happened because homosexual activity was criminalized.

And so if you're now saying that at Pride, kink and leather and queer sexuality should be monitored or tamped down, you're almost reinforcing the same kind of policing of our sexuality that was the root of the original riot.

**ROXANE GAY:** [00:31:43] Yes.

**SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN AM INUTE WITH SAM SANDERS:** [00:31:44] I don't

**ROXANE GAY:** [00:31:44] know.

**SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN AM INUTE WITH SAM SANDERS:** [00:31:44] It just feels like when there's this, the word "normal" tossed around a lot with these conversations about how much kink should be at pride, you realize normal would never fit us in, even if we faked it. You realize the idea of a nuclear family itself didn't have space for us ever, from the start. And this idea that we need to now look better to the nuclear family, to the normals.

How political, like capital P, do you think Pride is for most people today?

**ROXANE GAY:** [00:32:19] I don't think it's that political for most people in the same way that Christmas isn't that religious for most people.

**SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN AM INUTE WITH SAM SANDERS:** [00:32:25] Yeah. Yeah. How do you feel about that?

**ROXANE GAY:** [00:32:29] It's disappointing in a sense. But in some ways, look how far we've come, that we have an entire generation of queers that don't know why we celebrate Pride. But I also think that it's upon us as, well, I speak for myself as an older person in the community, that we remind the young 'uns like they don't know what they don't know. That's why it's important to teach our history.

**SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN AM INUTE WITH SAM SANDERS:** [00:32:53] I'm thinking about the activist Sylvia Rivera, who was booed in 1973, when she chastised the crowd at Pride for not helping trans people and queer people who were in jail or prison. And she said, "You tell me to go and hide my tail between my legs. I will not put up with this s. ...

**SILVIA RIVERA:** [00:33:13] I have been beaten. I've had my nose broken. I have been thrown into jail. I've lost my job. I have lost my apartment for gay liberation. And you all treat me this way? Think about that!

I do not believe in revolution, but you ought to. I believe in the gay power. I believe in that, I would not be out there fighting for our rights. That's all I wanted to say to your people.

**SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN AM INUTE WITH SAM SANDERS:** [00:33:48] And do you know what? Pride is for *her*.

**ROXANE GAY:** [00:33:51] Yes.

**SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN AN INUTE WITH SAM SANDERS:** [00:33:52] And until we find some place in which those voices are the loudest and in these conversations, I don't think we're there yet.

## **The History of LGBTQ+ Pride Part 2 - Past Present - Air Date 6-15-21**

**NEIL YOUNG - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT:** [00:33:59] I know Stonewall stands in as so big here and the popular conception of LGBTQ history of gay rights, of even Pride. And yes, Stonewall is obviously important, but I think, a lot of historians have pointed out, Stonewall's immediate effects were much more local.

And when we look to the other communities where these protests arose, in Los Angeles and San Francisco and DC, they were almost always directly connected to police violence and police brutality in those cities.

So for example, San Francisco, 1972 is their first gay protest march. And in 1972, the organizers of that event directly referenced a 1966 event, which was the Compton's Cafeteria riot. Again, similar scenario to Stonewall, where police went into a cafeteria that was a very popular location for queer persons to gather. And they just started, they had been beating them up all summer and finally one night the crowd there fought back. And so that direct connection to an event in a particular city that led to the mass organizing.

Again, I just want to point out how these things arose in very specific and very local contexts. And so if we had that perspective, we can understand the origins here as directly tied to police harassment, police violence, and local circumstances. And I think over time as these protests continue to play out on an annual basis, they began to link up across the country. And I think in some ways, the linking up across the country, which happens over the course of the 1970s, is part of what transforms it from local protests into something different, into celebration or at least into a parade, that's doing something different than again, that protest origin.

So I think it's changing over the seventies, certainly in the eighties and nineties. And it's all the more, I think once corporations get involved, and they see this as something that they want to sign on to, I think that really changes the look and feel of these events.

**NATALIE MEHLMAN PETRZELA - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT:** [00:36:02] Totally. Well, I look and feel, I think in these protests, this is rightly not the center of our conversation about the controversies, with this corporatization has come a little bit of a sanitization as well.

And I, every year being, first of all, I live right by Stonewall. I walk by this Christmas tree, like three times a day. It's really wild. But I'm also a parent in the neighborhood. And Pride is pretty much this non-controversial thing. Kids go out dressed in rainbow outfits. Like it's just this love one, love all thing. And so one of the controversies that comes up from families and from some other folks too, is around should kink and BDSM and overtly sexual things be included in Pride. And like some people, to your point earlier, Neil, about the triumph sort of family values sensibility in a certain part of this movement, are like, that's not respectable. That's not appropriate. This is a family event. Now, someone who died in 1970 and woke up today and would hear fair people being like "this is a family event" would be like, "What the

hell happened in America?" But I think it's so interesting. And in some ways, like such evidence of the triumph of this movement, that there are legitimately families who are offended that like this fringe part is offending their sensibilities because fundamentally Pride is this like wonderful wholesome event, when that is a sea change in so many ways. Like it was long after Stonewall, in the late seventies, there were still bills to not let gay people teach in schools because they were seen as recruiting children to the gay lifestyle. And I don't want to overstate the disappearance of homophobia because now talk about transphobia also. It's still very much with us. But this particular debate in Greenwich Village among families wanting to preserve the wholesomeness of Pride, it makes me smile.

**NICOLE HEMMER - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT:** [00:37:55] It definitely speaks to the triumph of one particular vision of what Pride looks like.

I want to pull on one other historical thread, and that is the idea of Pride in and of itself and the historical conditions under which that becomes the center of the way this movement is framed, right? Like it has to be understood in the context of the ideas of oppression and shame that had for so long been a barrier for gay men and women to access rights, to access acceptance. And that Pride was about not being ashamed, in addition to being liberated. Now in 1970, this was called a gay liberation march, not a Pride parade. But that idea of Pride, especially in the late 1960s and early 1970s as central to liberation movements. That liberation movements weren't just about freedom, but they were also looking internally at a community and putting Pride and a kind of celebratoriness at the heart of these movements. And this is true for Black Pride and Brown Pride and for feminism as well that there was something emotional and -- self-love is the wrong word -- but

**NEIL YOUNG - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT:** [00:39:20] Self-dignity.

**NATALIE MEHLMAN PETRZELA - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT:** [00:39:20] Self-determining, or like --

**NICOLE HEMMER - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT:** [00:39:22] The part of that I would argue with is self, that it was more than self, that it was about community, pride and dignity and determination.

**NATALIE MEHLMAN PETRZELA - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT:** [00:39:29] Collective uplift. Yeah.

**NICOLE HEMMER - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT:** [00:39:31] Yeah. I think that's an important thread in all of this as well.

**NEIL YOUNG - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT:** [00:39:35] I would just tweak that a little bit to say that I don't think the celebratory dimensions were there at the origins. I think that is a historical development, but I think absolutely with everything else that you're saying, the sense of pride, and I think what you're doing here is historicizing what Pride means over time. And so in those origin moments, when gayness, when homosexuality is conceived as illness, as deviance, as criminality, to talk about Pride is to articulate a sense of the self that has dignity. That is good. That was the signs that they carried: "Gay is Good." And that was a direct response to gay as sickness, to homosexuality as illness. It's an assertion of the self as self-determined, as dignified, as worthy, and as whole. And I think that is very different from a sort of celebratory impulse of Pride is a celebration of living your best life, for whatever the

kind of discourse of now is. And I think that's really important to see how that changes over time.

And certainly like in a lot of ways, that's a really great thing. And yet I think a lot of the conversations and the debates that are happening now are saying well, celebrations for whom? And celebrations of what? And not of all of us are on this same historical trajectory, or we find ourselves in really different places in this larger historical phenomenon of cultural acceptance that has played out in the last couple of decades. And it has accelerated in the last 10 years.

**NATALIE MEHLMAN PETRZELA - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT:** [00:41:00] Yeah. I can't help but think of Maslow's hierarchy of needs as you're describing that conversation, or that kind of evolution of the idea that one has to first satisfy their base levels of survival, which are shelter and food and protection. And then as you go up the hierarchy, eventually it's living your best life and fulfillment. And I think what you point out, Neil, which is really important, is that at the origins of Pride, that living your best life was so far -- I should say the origins of this protest -- that living your best life was so far away because this was a moment when you could not be your full self, be whole, as you put it, without being seen as deviant, mentally deficient and as a criminal. And so you were deprived of a livelihood, as we know from the whole lavender scare and have people being fired from their jobs, which came before, but had certain legacies there. And like I mentioned, even after with teachers not being gay teachers, not being allowed to be out, but also, you could be thrown in jail and et cetera.

So I think that I tend to be hesitant to psychologize social moments in that way, but I do think that is instructive.

And then it also explains some of the continued divisions of, for whom is this? Because we know right now, trans people are being continued to be deprived of many of those basic needs, even while others can move on to live their best life.

## **The Status of Laws and Policies Targeting the Transgender Community - The Takeaway - Air Date 6-1-21**

**TANZINA VEGA - HOST, THE TAKEAWAY:** [00:42:21] It's June One, the first day of Pride Month! Four weeks of marches, action, celebrations, protests, and Proms organized and led by LGBTQ+ communities across the globe to ensure visibility, build solidarity, and create change.

Pride is also the annual commemoration of the 1969 Stonewall Rebellion, the watershed week when the patrons and community of Greenwich Village's Stonewall Inn collectively resisted police violence and harassment.

**SEYMOUR PINE:** [00:42:52] It was a release of energy. They could now fight back for all the times they had to slink away without being able to say anything and take whatever crap the cops were giving at them. And once it broke loose, it was very contagious.

**TANZINA VEGA - HOST, THE TAKEAWAY:** [00:43:10] Deputy inspector Seymour Pine, who led the raid, speaking in an interview from 2004.

And that's the reminder that pride month is not only about cultural and community celebration; it is also about politics, a point president Biden made explicit in his address to Congress in April.

**PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN:** [00:43:28] I also hope Congress would get to my desk the Equality Act to protect LGBTQ Americans. All transgender Americans watching at home, especially young people, you're so brave! I want you to know your President has your back.

**TANZINA VEGA - HOST, THE TAKEAWAY:** [00:43:44] And President Biden's backing is especially important right now. More than 30 states have introduced bills, targeting the rights and freedoms of transgender people. All this while transgender youth and adults faced outsized rates of homelessness, incarceration, and vulnerability to violence.

With me now is Kate Sosin LGBTQ+ reporter at the 19th[news.org] Kate, welcome back!

**KATE SOSIN:** [00:44:12] Thank you for having me, Melissa, and Happy Pride!

**TANZINA VEGA - HOST, THE TAKEAWAY:** [00:44:15] Happy Pride! Now, I actually want to start by having you walk us through what some of this legislation has been, that's been introduced in states, specifically targeting transgender folk.

**KATE SOSIN:** [00:44:28] Yeah... The main two types of bills are what we call "medical youth bans." These are bills that prevent transgender youth from accessing affirming medical care.

For the most part, these are puberty blockers. When kids hit an age where they are at an age where they would be comfortable transitioning, then they might be able to... but in the meantime, while they're figuring that out, they can go on a puberty blockers that just prevents them from experiencing development in a body where they wouldn't be comfortable. So this is just pauses puberty.

Those bills prevent kids from accessing that medical care that providers have found is really effective in preventing mental duress and suicides.

The other kind of bill are these "trans-sports bills," which we've seen a lot of in the media. And this says that, trans girls especially cannot play on sports teams with other girls. And those bills we've seen pass at really alarming speeds. Last year, we only saw this passing in one state, and now we have eight states that have passed these bills.

**TANZINA VEGA - HOST, THE TAKEAWAY:** [00:45:33] Can we start by talking a little bit here about where these bills come from, right? It's not an accident that we see several dozen states all at once seeking to pass legislation that is quite similar. Where are they getting these bills?

**KATE SOSIN:** [00:45:48] That's a really good question. We actually found there's a website that generates this legislation, so you can just log in and request a bill. And this is done by a coalition of anti LGBTQ organizations, a number of them that have been labeled hate organizations by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

And so you can just go in and fill in what kind of model legislation you want and they will generate a bill for you. That's part of it. The other part of it is... these kinds of bills have been generating and kicked around for years. So after the advent of marriage equality in 2015, the focus both in the LGBTQ community and then people who opposed LGBTQ rights shifted to trans rights.

And we saw bathroom bills in 2016, and that campaign largely failed. And then the shift went to trans kids, because, how many of us really know trans kids? Not a lot. Less of us know trans people than gay people, for example, and even fewer of us know transgender children. That's an issue that's much easier to legislate around because few of us actually know the people that are impacted.

**TANZINA VEGA - HOST, THE TAKEAWAY:** [00:47:02] So it's this bizarre reality, where on the one hand, there is no problem here to solve, right? There's not some... there's not some fundamental crux of anxiety in middle schools where trans kids are overwhelming the sports teams, but, right... the problem that it creates, right? So it's not solving a problem, but it is creating a problem, right? For vulnerable communities.

Talk to us a little bit about, for example, the economic vulnerability of trans folks, and particularly trans folks of color, and how COVID really revealed so much of this economic vulnerability.

**KATE SOSIN:** [00:47:36] This is a really important question, I think. So, in... the worst year that we had ever seen for transgender homicides, 2017. And in 2017, we had 27 reported transgender homicides. It was a crisis unlike anything we'd ever seen.

In 2020, we had 44 trans homicides. So, COVID, and the pandemic, pushed trans people, mostly black trans women, further to the margins. And trans people in general experience unemployment at three times the general population, according to the last survey we have, which was in 2015.

Now this year, before pride month, which is when we always see an uptick in trans homicides, were already at 27 transgender murders. We're almost doubling the pace of what we saw last year already. And most of those deaths are transgender women of color.

And a lot of advocates are saying that it's the pandemic, and it's also these anti-trans bills. So what we're seeing is these bills that are passing in states like Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, South Dakota, Montana, places where you don't necessarily have huge populations of transgender women of color.

But then we're also seeing the homicide rate of black trans women tick up in states like New York, in cities like Chicago, where we do have these high populations of black trans women.

So the crisis is being felt across the country and these bills are impacting trans people everywhere.

## **Chasten Buttigieg Blasts Hypocrisy Of RNC Chair, Stresses The Equality Act - MSNBC - Air Date 6-9-21**

**NICOLE WALLACE - HOST, DEADLINE: WHITE HOUSE:** [00:49:15] When GOP chairwoman Ronna McDaniel tweeted last week that the Republican party will continue to grow what she called it's rising support from the LGBTQ community, "by supporting measures that promote fairness and balance protections for LGBTQ Americans, and those with deeply held religious beliefs". Chasten Buttigieg called out the hypocrisy and challenged her position, tweeting, "those with deeply held religious beliefs are often the parents who force their LGBTQ children out of the home and onto the street. I've met with those kids. 40% of homeless youth in this country are LGBTQ. Revisit your party's platform before you open your mouth about Pride."

Whew. Joining us now is Chasten Buttigieg. So I want to get to your clap back, but I want to start with your book and something that we started talking about when the hardcover came out, but it's so beautiful, and I read it again today and I just, I have to... You write this. "I just knew that if I came out, I would lose my family and my friends. I'd already packed my bags and started moving out of the house before I did it. I stayed up wondering how there could be anything next for me. Counting down the hours until I lost everything I knew. That's how I thought about it. I never considered the freedom I'd feel once I was able to be myself in front of my parents and friends."

You write beautifully and it's equal parts, so raw and so painful, and I just, with the book coming back out and you coming back on, I was looking at it again and it's just incredibly powerful. I wonder what having it out and having a chance to talk about it again has been.

**CHASTEN BUTTIGIEG:** [00:50:50] Thanks so much, Nicole, for having me back on and it's fitting that it's Pride month. I appreciate you reading that passage. I'm lucky to be sitting here today, and during Pride month, it's a great time that we recommit ourselves to sticking up for everybody in this community. And I wrote that passage truthfully. I was a pretty suicidal teenager when I ran away from home at age 17 and in this country an LGBTQ kid considers suicide about every two seconds, and I was one of those kids. And so I use this platform and this opportunity to share my story, but also to show up for those kids, like you mentioned, 40% of the kids who are sleeping out on the street tonight identify as LGBTQ.

So, getting to the clap back, that's why we have to stand up against the hypocrisy and the dangerous language like the chair woman put out there, because they're really vulnerable kids in this country, and that type of language hurts them.

**NICOLE WALLACE - HOST, DEADLINE: WHITE HOUSE:** [00:51:45] I felt that in your response. It wasn't this political space you were occupying, it was a defense of people who are now walking in shoes you can very much relate to, and I wonder if you can just expand on that? What can we all do?

**CHASTEN BUTTIGIEG:** [00:52:01] Yeah, absolutely. I think some people, like the chairwoman, are focused on slapping rainbow stickers on tweets and saying you support the LGBTQ community, but really what we all need to be doing right now is working to pass the Equality Act. So if the chairwoman is right, that the Republican party is truly the party of LGBTQ inclusivity, which I believe it is not, then we should have no problem passing the Equality Act. The Equality Act guarantees sweeping civil rights legislation for the LGBTQ community. People in this country can still be denied housing, employment, education opportunities, and that's why civil rights legislation is so important.

This community is consistently under attack, day in and day out, specifically the transgender community, and we see that happening in Florida with Ron DeSantis using the first day of Pride to pass anti-trans legislation, and so everybody in this country can step up and call their elected officials and ask them to pass the Equality Act,

## **Progress on voting rights, filibuster, SCOTUS upholds Obamacare - The BradCast - Air Date 6-17-21**

**BRAD FRIEDMAN - HOST, THE BRADCAST:** [00:52:57] The other big opinion that was handed down today as a unanimous ruling by the high court; according to AP, in another victory for religious groups at the Supreme Court, the justices on Thursday unanimously sided with a Catholic foster care agency that says its religious views prevent it from working with same-sex couples.

The court said the City of Philadelphia had wrongly limited its relationship with the group as a result of the agency's policy. The ruling, however, was specific to the facts of just this case, which sidesteps bigger questions about how to balance religious freedom and anti-discrimination laws, so that religious folks can somehow retain their rights to discriminate against their fellow Americans. Like any good religion should. Am I right, Jesus?

Instead, the... the outcome here turns on the language, the specific language, in the city's foster care contract. In a ruling that had all kinds of separate opinions and concurring opinions on a fractured court that still somehow managed to find its way, ultimately, to a unanimous decision here, in favor of the religious groups.

Three Republican justices made clear that they would have gone much further, but LGBT groups said that they were relieved that the decision was limited.

Chief Justice John Roberts wrote for the majority of the court here, that "The Catholic Social Services," (this is the group in question ), they "Seeks only an accommodation that will allow it to continue serving the children of Philadelphia in a manner consistent with its religious beliefs. It does not seek to impose those beliefs on anyone else," said Roberts.

Even if those beliefs mean that they will not work with gay couples to find homes for children in need. Apparently, that's allowable, at least in this case.

Robert's concluded that Philadelphia's refusal to, "Contract with the company. (The Catholic Social Services company) for the provision of foster care services, unless it agrees to certify same-sex couples as foster parents," that violates the First Amendment Rights of the group.

Because of its beliefs, the Catholic agency also does not certify unmarried couples either. And apparently that is also fine.

Philadelphia learned in 2018 from a newspaper reporter that Catholic Social Services would not certify same-sex couples to become foster parents. The city has said it requires the foster care agencies that it works with to not discriminate as part of their contracts.

The city asked CSS to change its policy, but they declined. As a result, Philadelphia stopped referring additional children to the agency. The group then sued, but lower courts side... sided with Philadelphia.

Today, the highest court in the land decided unanimously that the group was both allowed to discriminate and that the City of Philadelphia has to contract with them.

Now, the ruling only applies to this specific case, as I said, and the specific contract terms that were written into Philadelphia's foster care contracting policies. It does not allow discrimination by all such groups.

At least not yet. In recent years, religious groups have been thrilled to win a bunch of victories, one after another, at the high court, often by wide margins, that includes cases in which: the court lifted a ban on state aid to religious schooling; gave religious schools greater leeway to hire and fire teachers; and allowed across to remain on public lands. More recently, the court repeatedly sided with religious groups when it came to fights over corona virus restrictions.

The cases outcome today was similar to a 2018 decision, that I suspect you'll remember, in which the court sided with a Colorado baker who would not make a wedding cake for a same-sex couple. But that decision as well, despite how some reported it thereafter, that decision was also limited to that... to the specific facts of just that case, and it dodged bigger issues of how to balance religious freedom and anti-discrimination laws.

But the court since then has lurched even farther to the right. And so a lot of folks are actually breathing a sigh of relief today that the ruling only applies in the Philadelphia case.

Leslie Cooper, the deputy director of the ACLU... ACLU's LGBTQ and HIV project, which was involved in this case, (they were on Philadelphia's side here)... she noted that, "In both cases," the 2018 'Cake case,' and this one, "the court reached narrow very fact specific decisions that leave non-discrimination laws and policies standing and fully enforceable by governments." She said, "We are relieved that the court did not recognize a license to discriminate based on religious beliefs here. Opponents of LGBTQ equality have been seeking to undo hard won non-discrimination protections," she notes, "by asking the court to establish a constitutional right to opt out of such laws when discrimination is motivated by religious beliefs."

She says, "This is the second time in four years that the court has declined to do so," and said, "This is good news for the LGBTQ people, and for everyone who depends on the protections of non-discrimination laws."

"Federal state and local governments can, and should," she said, "continue to pass and enforce comprehensive non-discrimination laws. This is critical, given the high rates of discrimination experienced by the LGBT... LGBTQ community." She says, "It will not affect any foster care programs that do not have pretty much the exact same system for a specific exemptions," calling it, "Good news for the more than 400,000 children in foster care across the country, who are the ones who get hurt the most if placement decisions are made based on an agency's religious beliefs, rather than the child's best interest."

Three Republican justices here who joined Roberts' opinion said they would have gone further. That would be: Alito, Thomas, and Gorsuch. They said they would have overruled in 1990 Supreme Court decision that they said improperly allows limits on freedom-- religious freedom, in this case. Alito called the court's ruling Thursday, "A wisp of a decision."

Philadelphia, the city solicitor, Diana Cortez, called the ruling, " Difficult and disappointing." In a statement, she said the court had, "Usurped the city's judgment that a non-discrimination policy is in the best interests of the children in its care," but said that she was also, "gratified that the justices did not radically change existing constitutional law to adopt a standard that would force court ordered religious exemptions from civic obligations in every arena."

So again, at least for now with a hard-right, and growing harder-righter court, unless Democrats can get their act together and expand the court to unpeck it from the Republicans, you can bet that this 6-3 right-wing court will continue to chip away at all sorts of American rights to equality in the months and years ahead.

But a small bullet, anyway, dodged there, for the moment.

## **Pride 2021 has set a record in anti-trans bills in America - PBS NewsHour - Air Date 6-6-21**

**IVETTE FELICIANO - HOST, NEWSHOUR WEEKEND'S:** [01:01:08] Chase, please describe Florida's Fairness in Women's Sports Act, and explain why it has sparked so much outrage among civil rights activists.

**CHASE STRANGIO:** [01:01:18] Yeah. So of course, on the first day of Pride, Republican Governor DeSantis signs this anti-trans bill, what it is a ban on trans women and girls participating in women's and girls' sports. Unfortunately, it is similar to seven other bills that have been signed into law just in 2021 and analogous to Idaho's ban on trans women and girls participating in sports that was signed into law in 2020. So we're now seeing this widespread movement to ban women and girls who are trans from women's sports.

I think what happened in Florida, which is not totally anomalous in terms of what's going on elsewhere, is that you have this bill which is falsely pitched as defending and protecting women. What it does is ban a subset of women and girls from sports, trans women and girls, and in the process, it allows the state to police the bodies of all women and girl athletes. It turns over this policing authority, because essentially what it's saying is that some women and girls aren't legitimately women and girls, and the state and others are empowered to challenge people's sex.

**IVETTE FELICIANO - HOST, NEWSHOUR WEEKEND'S:** [01:02:20] Chase, as more than 250 bills aimed at the LGBTQ community have been introduced in state legislatures this year, according to the human rights campaign, why 2021, and how does Florida's new law fit into that picture?

**CHASE STRANGIO:** [01:02:37] I mean, I think there's a lot of reasons that we're seeing this escalation of attacks on the LGBTQ community and particularly on the trans community. It's part of a continued backlash from marriage equality. So when the supreme court struck down bans on marriage for same-sex couples in 2015, you immediately saw a backlash in a form of legislative attacks on trans people, and trans youth in particular. There was a little bit of a lull in state legislatures during the four years of the Trump administration, where I think you saw less urgency from far right state governments, because they knew that they had the federal government on their side to be the main discriminator against LGBTQ people.

Then what we see in 2020 is this perfect storm, where you have the election of Joe Biden and the backlash to that. You also have, in June of 2020, the supreme court issuing a landmark opinion, making clear that LGBTQ people are covered under existing civil rights statutes. So that's another area where you have this incredibly important supreme court decision, much like the marriage equality decision, that also leads to backlash.

**IVETTE FELICIANO - HOST, NEWSHOUR WEEKEND'S:** [01:03:44] We've heard more about legislation aimed at blocking transgender youth from playing on sports teams, consistent with their gender identity, or aimed at blocking them from receiving gender affirming medical care, but what other bills and laws are on your radar?

**CHASE STRANGIO:** [01:04:00] In Montana, a bill that banned updates to birth certificates to align with people's gender, that was passed and signed into law by Governor Gianforte. Tennessee passed a series of anti-trans bills, one of which would require businesses that allow trans people to use the restroom to post signage to signal to customers that trans people might be using a restroom, as well as other restrictions on trans people accessing restrooms consistent with their gender identity in schools.

And then we also saw a lot of bills that would expand the ability of individuals, of businesses, to turn people away from services, including medical services, if they had any moral or religious objection. Arkansas, for example, passed an incredibly broad medical conscience bill, and it was very much designed to target trans people that will allow medical providers to turn away a trans patient just based on any simple rejection of transness. And that's not just related to gender affirming care, that would be turning people away for any reason.

**IVETTE FELICIANO - HOST, NEWSHOUR WEEKEND'S:** [01:04:58] And obviously this is the beginning of Pride month, and we're seeing a lot of companies and corporations celebrating Pride and including Pride flags in their marketing campaigns. And some corporations have even issued statements, opposing anti-LGBTQ state legislation. Is that enough in your opinion?

**CHASE STRANGIO:** [01:05:17] No, it's not enough, and I think it's incredibly difficult to stomach the Pride merchandising this year, because what we know is that corporations have an incredible amount of power when it comes to pushing back against state legislation. I think, by and large, we had corporations being incredibly recalcitrant, and though in the past we've seen some corporate engagement around defending LGBTQ people from these types of state legislative attacks, when it came to the types of truly terrifying attacks on trans youth that we saw this year, there was almost no action from the corporate sector.

And what we did see was incredibly minimal engagement, sign-ons to just a general letter instead of having companies engage, particularly where you had companies either headquartered in certain states or doing a lot of business in certain states, we did not see the level of engagement needed. And so when it comes time for Pride month, I think we all have to be particularly discerning because it's very clear that companies are willing to leverage our likeness and leverage our magic, but then not show up when it comes time to making sure that states don't take away our material opportunities for survival. And that's really what we're contending with.

## Summary

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** [01:06:25] We've just heard clips today, starting with *Hysteria* discussing the corporatization and pinkwashing of pride and the bullshit of cause-marketing. *PFLAG National* discussed police at Pride. *Past Present* explained the influence of respectability politics and assimilationist thinking on the Pride movement. *It's Been a Minute with Sam Sanders* continued the discussion on police brutality against queer people and the mainstreaming of Pride. *Past Present* looked into the origins and evolution of Pride. *The Takeaway*, look at the record breaking number of anti-trans bills being introduced around the country. MSNBC spoke with Chasten Buttigieg about the hypocrisy of the RNC chair and the need for the Equality Act, so now that you're informed and angry you should tell your legislators to support the Equality Act too.

That's what everyone heard, but members also heard bonus clips from *The BradCast* giving the details on the recent SCOTUS ruling, which approved a restriction on gay adoption, but luckily only limited the ruling to that one case. And the *PBS NewsHour* discussed more of the anti-trans bills, particularly related to sports.

For non-members, those bonus clips are linked in the show notes and are part of the transcript for today's episode, so you can still find them if you want to make the effort, but to hear that and all of our bonus content delivered seamlessly into your podcast feed, sign up to support the show at [bestoftheleft.com/support](https://bestoftheleft.com/support) or request a financial hardship membership, because we don't make a lack of funds a barrier to hearing more information. Every request this is granted, no questions asked.

## Final comments on @WhoWroteBetter on Twitter

Thanks to all those who called into the voicemail line or wrote in their messages to be played as a VoicedMails. If you'd like to leave a comment or question of your own to be played on the show, you can record a message at 202-999-3991, or write me a message to [Jay@BestoftheLeft.com](mailto:Jay@BestoftheLeft.com).

Now I'm going to announce something that I already announced on the member's show.

I've started a secret Twitter account that I would like for you to follow and sort of support, which I'll explain. But as I said, I announced it on the member's show first. And so Alan from Connecticut already has a response to it.

**VOICEMAILER: ALAN FROM CONNECTICUT:** [01:08:37] Hey Jay, it's Alan from Connecticut calling in while I'm sitting here charging my car. And what do I do when I'm sitting here charging my car? I listened to *Best of the Left*, of course. Is there anything else to do while you're charging your car?

Anyway, I've been listening to you pump up about Twitter stuff and I just have to laugh. I don't begin to understand Twitter. And it just seems to me to be a different version of social media. And for someone who says that they don't do social media, like you don't want to touch it, and I think you referenced Facebook most of the time when you, when you talk about that, but then to be pumping up Twitter, and it's not the first time that I've heard you reference that. So I'm just curious, is Twitter an okay social media outlet, as opposed to some of the others? Is it something that we should invest in, like I should actually open up a

Twitter account and go check this out? Not that I really want to, but I just want a little bit more feedback from you on that.

So stay awesome. Keep wearing your mask. And know that we too love you.

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** [01:09:37] So we've got some very understandable misunderstandings here.

First of all, Twitter absolutely is a social media network. It is different from Facebook, just as it's different from Instagram, but they're all competing with each other to see which one can be the most detrimental to society. And they all come at it from different angles. So Instagram tries to hurt people's self-image more. Whereas Twitter tries to really break down the foundations of how people communicate. And then Facebook does a little bit of all of those things in its own special way. So yeah, they're all terrible. And my messaging on that hasn't changed. I am essentially completely opposed to social media and Alan's right. I don't use it myself. I have no interest in it. But I find myself lucky. I consider myself lucky that I don't have an interest in it. But I know that lots of people do have an interest in it. And there are even more, or like lots and lots of people, who feel obliged to use it. That there's not a great alternative to using it, if you want to maintain any sort of social connections.

Anyway, understandable that me announcing that I started a new Twitter account that I would like for people to go follow doesn't make sense, in the context of me saying that social media is terrible.

But in actuality, nothing has changed. I still think it's terrible, but I think that this Twitter account that I'm launching has some merit and can have some value, primarily because I don't plan on using it to have conversations of any sort. That is not the purpose of it. And if you are starting a Twitter account because you'd like to talk with people online, stop now and go outside. Do something else with your life other than get on Twitter to try to talk with people. Just don't do that.

So the idea behind this Twitter account is Amanda years ago had an idea about shaming headline writers. In the media, articles are written and then usually some other editor writes headlines. And sometimes headlines are written so poorly that they genuinely mislead you away from the facts of the news story. And so she had a little post that she thought, this should turn into a Twitter account, but she never followed through. But she posted on Facebook, "Who wrote it better?" And posted these two headlines, one of which was wildly misleading, and the other of which actually explained what was going on. And so the whole purpose is to sort of inform people about the misleading nature of headlines, or how they can be misleading, and encourage people to dig a little deeper, look beyond the headlines. That's part of it. But then also shame media entities into doing a better job writing their headlines so that people don't get misled and they don't have to be on their guard all the time to not be misled. So we've launched this Twitter account to carry on that legacy.

But there is a secret underlying ulterior motive for this. Which is because I would like not just to get the word out about misleading headlines and have people help shame media organizations into doing better, I want it to become a little bit of an entity that people are aware of so that when they come across badly-written headlines, they will think to themselves, "This looks like a badly-written headline. I'm going to mention @WhoWroteBetter Twitter account so that the word can get out. That's the ultimate goal,

because it'll be valuable for me to have people out in the Twitterverse sending me headlines, because I would like to collect those. That's the secret ulterior motive. So I'm running this Twitter account: it's @WhoWroteBetter and that is the only thing it does. It just posts side-by-side comparisons of reasonably good and usually quite badly-written headlines about the same story. And so I'm just slowly trying to build it into an entity and so you should go follow it.

And as you are going about your normal life reading good and bad headlines, when you come across a bad one, make sure to let me know. But I happily welcome Alan's comments as a reminder that none of this changes any of my opinions about social media.

And if you're not already on social media, don't get on it. If you've made it this far avoiding it, it will not improve your life to start now. So just don't. If you're already on it, then go ahead and follow our account. Obviously a link to that will be in the show notes.

As always, keep the comments coming in at 202-999-3991, or by emailing me to Jay@BestoftheLeft.com.

That is going to be it for today. Thanks to everyone for listening. Thanks to Deon Clark and Erin Clayton for their research work for the show and participation in our bonus episodes. Thanks to the Monosyllabic Transcriptionist Trio, Ben, Ken, and Scott for their volunteer work, helping put our transcripts together. Thanks to Amanda Hoffman for all of her work on our social media outlets. I mean, seriously, thanks to her for doing that so I don't have to. It takes a toll on her and she should be earning bonuses for that or something. She also does our activism segments, graphic design, web mastering, sometimes, occasional bonus show co-hosting and so forth.

And of course, thanks to those who support the show by becoming a member or purchasing gift memberships at BestoftheLeft.com/support or from right inside the Apple Podcast app, if that's your style. For details on the show itself, including links to all of the sources and music used in this and every episode, all that information can always be found in the show notes on the website and likely right on the device you're using to listen.

So coming to you from far outside the conventional wisdom of Washington, DC, my name is Jay!, and this has been the *Best of the Left* podcast coming to you twice weekly, thanks entirely to the members and donors to the show from BestoftheLeft.com.