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RESEARCH THAT MATTERS

Impact of the Trump Administration on Transgender Parents and their Children

March 2026

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Executive Summary

With the election of President Donald J. Trump to a second term, many transgender Americans reported experiencing significant fear, anxiety, and anger. One of President Trump's first executive orders aimed to erase the identities of transgender and nonbinary people for the purposes of federal law and policy, with sweeping implications for non-discrimination protections, accurate federal identification documents, incarcerated transgender people, health care access for transgender youth, access to shelters and other services, and students' access to equal education, including access to restrooms and sports participation. Many transgender people have other identities that create additional vulnerabilities under Trump administration policies, such as having low income, being a person of color, being disabled, and being an immigrant (James et al., 2024).

Considering the long history of legislative discrimination against transgender parents, coupled with the Trump administration's anti-transgender rhetoric and policies, transgender people who are parents are particularly vulnerable and may be experiencing heightened concerns in the current sociopolitical and legislative climate.

Through a survey of 108 transgender and nonbinary parents conducted in 2025, this study explores transgender parents' experiences and worries related to the Trump administration's policies and the current sociolegal climate, with a focus on understanding a) the impacts on their children; b) their guidance and precautions for their children to promote safety and avoid harm; and c) their actions and avoidance behaviors in response to the current climate and Trump administration.

Most of the 108 respondents to the survey identified as nonbinary (37%), transgender women (32%), or transgender men (22%); the remaining 9% identified as genderqueer, genderfluid, or genderflux. One-third (33%) of respondents were people of color. About two-thirds of these parents (65%) were younger parents aged 18-35. Most of these parents (86%) had either one or two children. Half (50%) had at least one child who was five years old or younger, 60% had at least one child who was between 6 and 12, and 36% had at least one child who was between 13 and 18.

Many of these parents faced significant financial and health challenges. Over the past year, more than one-third (42%) struggled to pay basic household expenses, and 34% struggled to pay rent, while over one in five (22%) received government assistance to meet their families' food and nutritional needs. Most respondents (94%) reported at least one health challenge during the past year, including over three-fourths (79%) who reported anxiety and over two-thirds who reported depression (67%).

Key Findings

"My older child has started asking why some people hate families like ours and whether I'll 'get taken away.'"

Many respondents described multiple ways that their children had been negatively impacted by the Trump administration's stance on trans people. They emphasized how their children had been impacted by anti-transgender messages at school, in their community, and in the media, including social media.

In some cases, children's anxieties reflected their intersecting marginalized identities, as nonbinary or transgender themselves and/or as people of color.

While 45% of respondents felt that their children were too young to be sufficiently aware of current events to be affected by the Trump administration's policies, the other 55% of respondents provided the following impacts on their children:

- **Anxiety and fear.** Two-thirds of parents (66%) reported that their children were more anxious and/or fearful due to the Trump administration.
- **New worries and concerns.** Over half (56%) said their children had expressed new worries or concerns since Trump's election. Some specific worries and concerns included:
 - **Parents' safety and health.** Concerns about their parents' safety and whether their parents will lose their gender-affirming care.
 - **Family safety.** Concerns about whether their families will face discrimination, harassment, or violence, and questions about why people don't like their parents or their families.
 - **Family stability.** Whether their families will be split up, whether they will be taken away from their parents, and whether their families will have to move to a safer location.
- **Mitigation and coping strategies**
 - To mitigate their children's fears, many respondents emphasized three key communication strategies: acknowledging, validating, and processing their children's concerns; providing reassurance that their families were safe; and making promises to advocate for their children and families.
 - Other responses about mitigating and coping strategies focused on providing information to their children, building up their children's self-esteem, cultivating open communication, and providing a historical perspective on what was happening in the United States.

Actions Transgender Parents Have Taken to Protect Their Children and Families

"Safety feels like something I now have to plan for in every decision."

Most respondents (87%) reported at least one change in how they approached protecting their children's safety and well-being since Trump's re-election. These strategies included:

- **Limiting visibility.** About four in 10 respondents (39%) limited their own transgender identity or their family's visibility (e.g., on social media, in public spaces) out of safety concerns.
- **Avoiding family spaces.** Almost half of participants (45%) sought to fully avoid one or more family-oriented spaces and events, such as family gatherings (27%), playgrounds and parks (19%), pediatricians' offices (17%), school events (16%), schools and day care (15%), and social events for children, such as birthday parties (15%).
- **Moving.** About one in five (19%) were considering moving to a different state/country to protect their family's safety or legal protections.

**“I had to take my children out of school and homeschool them
due to bullying and being harassed.”**

- **Homeschooling or changing schools.** Fifteen percent (15%) had decided to homeschool or change their children’s school to ensure a safer/more affirming environment.
 - **Securing legal protections.** Some transgender parents reported shoring up legal recognition of their family relationships in response to the Trump presidency. For example:
 - Nearly one-third (30%) of respondents had secured additional legal safeguards to protect their legal relationship with their child.
 - About six in 10 (59%) had pursued (additional) legal safeguards for their relationship with their partner (25%) or were considering doing so (34%).
 - **Learning more about self-defense.** Transgender parents also reported learning more about self-defense and taking actions to defend themselves and their families as a result of the Trump presidency:
 - Almost three-fourths (73%) had already pursued self-defense classes (19%) or were considering doing so (54%).
 - Almost two-thirds (64%) had already bought pepper spray, a personal alarm, or safety device (38%), or were considering doing so (26%).
-

**“I try to affirm that a day is coming when the LGBTQ community
will no longer face discrimination.”**

- **Increasing community engagement and advocacy.** Some transgender parents also reported supporting themselves or their children in becoming more active in the LGBTQ community and in LGBTQ advocacy as a result of the Trump presidency:
 - Most respondents (89%) reported already learning more about their rights related to safety and discrimination (70%) or were considering doing so (19%).
 - Over one third had talked more directly with their children about discrimination and civil rights (39%); increased their child/ren’s exposure to LGBTQ affirming media, spaces, and communities (37%); or had become more involved in advocacy, community organizing, or mutual aid to protect their families (34%).

Many transgender parents reported that their children, who are old enough to understand the rhetoric and policies of the Trump presidency, were experiencing anxiety and fear, including about their parents and their own safety and well-being. These fears strike to the very heart of these families’ security and stability: for some, what is at stake is not a set of negative impacts on their family, but whether their family will survive the Trump presidency intact. In response to the significant pressures of the Trump presidency, transgender parents limit their outness as transgender and nonbinary people and the visibility of their families, avoid public spaces that are important to children and families, and have even

considered moving to safer communities. Many respondents also reported taking concrete actions to support their children and protect their families in response to the Trump presidency. In the face of significant pressures, many respondents reported drawing on their family's values, the past, and hope for the future to help them cope.

Findings

Sample Demographics

Most of the 108 respondents to the survey identified as nonbinary (37%), transgender women (32%), or transgender men (22%); the remaining 9% identified as genderqueer, genderfluid, or genderflux. (See Table 1.) Most (92%) had changed their name, pronouns, gender marker, or appearance.

Two-thirds (67%) were white, and one-third (33%) were people of color. Most identified as bisexual (45%), queer (12%), or pansexual (12%). Smaller numbers identified as gay (10%), lesbian (8%), or something else (e.g., heterosexual, asexual, and lesbian; 13%).

The vast majority were employed (93%), and 78% had a college degree or more. In terms of income, over half (54%) reported annual family incomes of \$100,000 or less, with 14% reporting family incomes of \$25,000 or less. Forty-six percent reported family incomes of over \$100,000. For context, the median family income in the United States for 2024 was \$105,000.¹

Almost one-fifth of respondents were young parents (18-25 years old; 18%). Almost half (47%) were ages 26 to 35, one-third (33%) were 36 to 50, and just two (2%) were over 50.

The largest number of participants were from Texas (16%), New York (7%), Virginia (7%), North Carolina (6%), and Florida (5%), with one to four participants in an additional 29 states.

Almost three-quarters were married (70%), almost one-fifth were partnered but not married (18%), and 9% were single. In addition, three respondents indicated that they were dating, and one was separated. Of the 99 participants with partners, 22% said their partners were cisgender women, 20% were transgender women, 18% said their partners were transgender men, 17% were cisgender men, 11% were nonbinary, 7% were men of transgender experience, and 4% indicated something else (e.g., genderqueer, multiple partners of different genders). Put differently, over half of these families included two transgender or nonbinary parents (55%), 35% included a transgender or nonbinary parent and a cisgender parent, and 10% included just one transgender or nonbinary parent with no partner.

The Methodology section at the end of this report provides further details on the study procedures and recruitment.

Table 1. Demographics of study participants (N = 108)

Variable	N	%
Gender identity		
Transgender woman	34	31.5%
Transgender man/man of transgender experience ^a	24	22.2%
Nonbinary	40	37.0%
Genderqueer	3	2.8%
Something else (e.g., genderfluid; genderflux)	7	6.5%

¹ Median Family Income in the United States (MEFAINUSA646N), FED. RSRV. BANK ST. LOUIS, <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/MEFAINUSA646N> (accessed Feb. 1, 2026).

Variable	N	%
Gender transition		
Changed my gender marker (e.g., on official IDs)	35	32.4%
Changed my legal name	27	25.0%
Use hormone therapy	42	38.9%
Use different pronouns	76	70.4%
Go by a different name	43	39.8%
Changed clothing, jewelry, or hairstyle to fit with gender identity	74	68.5%
Started or stopped wearing makeup	46	42.6%
Changed facial hair	39	36.1%
Have not done any of these	9	8.3%
Sexual orientation		
Bisexual	49	45.4%
Queer	13	12.0%
Pansexual	13	12.0%
Gay	11	10.2%
Lesbian	8	7.4%
Something else (e.g., heterosexual; asexual and lesbian; demisexual)	14	13.0%
Age		
18-25 years old	19	17.6%
26-30	25	23.1%
31-35	26	24.1%
36-40	23	21.3%
41-45	10	9.3%
46-50	3	2.8%
51+	2	1.8%
Race^b		
White	78	72.2%
Black	29	26.9%
Hispanic	4	3.7%
Asian	2	1.9%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	0.9%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	0.9%
Something else (i.e., "mixed")	1	0.9%
Racial category		
White only	72	66.7%
Of color	36	33.3%

Variable	N	%
Education		
High school diploma	8	7.4%
Some college/an associate's degree	16	14.8%
Bachelor's degree	30	27.8%
Master's degree	39	36.1%
PhD/JD/MD	15	13.9%
Employment		
Employed	100	92.6%
Not employed	8	7.4%
Family income		
0-\$12,500	8	7.4%
\$12,501-\$25,000	7	6.5%
\$25,001-\$50,000	14	13.0%
\$50,001-\$75,000	20	18.5%
\$75,001-\$100,000	9	8.3%
\$101,001-\$125,000	16	14.8%
\$125,001-\$150,000	9	8.3%
\$150,001-\$175,000	8	7.3%
\$175,001-\$200,000	3	2.8%
>\$200,000	14	13.0%

Note: ^a Twenty participants identified as transgender men and four identified as men of transgender experience. No participants identified as women of transgender experience; all 34 participants in the parallel category identified as transgender women.

^b Numbers add up to more than 100 because individuals could endorse more than one response.

Parenting

Most parents had either one (43%) or two (43%) children, and most parents (93%) had a legally recognized relationship with all of their children. Half (50%) of respondents had at least one child who was 5 years old or younger; 60% had at least one child who was between 6 and 12; and 36% had at least one child who was between 13 and 18. See Table 2 for the number, age, and legal status of participants' children.

Table 2. Number, age, and legal status of children (N = 108)

Variable	N	%
Number of children		
1	46	42.6%
2	46	42.6%
3	9	8.3%
4	4	3.7%
5+	3	2.8%

Variable	N	%
Age of children		
Any child 0-5	54	50.0%
Any child 6-12	65	60.2%
Any child 13-18	39	36.1%
Any child over 18	1	0.9%
Legal status of children		
Legal parent to all children	100	92.6%
Legal parent to some children	3	2.8%
Legal parent to no children	5	4.6%

Pressures on Transgender Parents

Financial Insecurity and Reliance on Governmental Assistance

Respondents were asked about financial challenges over the past year (See Table 3), with 68% reporting at least one type of financial challenge. Over the past year, 42% of respondents had struggled to pay basic household expenses, and one-third (34%) had struggled to pay their rent. Thirty percent had relied on family or friends to pay living expenses during that time period. Four percent said they had slept outside, in a shelter, or in a place not meant for sleeping in the past year.

Regarding government assistance, over two-thirds (69%) reported currently interacting with or receiving at least one type of assistance from government programs. Forty-four percent of the sample reported current reliance on, or interaction with, federal or state health care (Medicare, Medicaid), 23% with government-subsidized mental health services, 22% with food assistance, 10% with financial/cash assistance, 8% with Head Start, and 5% with child welfare services. Just over three in 10 (31%) did not use or interface with any of these systems.

Overall, more than two-thirds of respondents experienced financial challenges in the past year and were currently relying on some form of government assistance or interacting with an agency that provides such support. Financial precarity and dependence on the government may inform their approach to engaging with such services during the Trump administration.

Table 3. Past-year financial challenges and current reliance on governmental assistance (N = 108)

Experience	N	%
Past-year experiences of financial challenge		
Struggled to pay rent	37	34.3%
Struggled to pay basic household expenses	45	41.7%
Relied on family/friends to pay living expenses	32	29.6%
Slept outside, in a shelter, or in a place not meant for sleeping	4	3.7%
None of these	34	31.5%

Experience	N	%
Do you currently interact with and/or receive support from these social service agencies?		
Health insurance (e.g., Medicaid, Medicare)	47	43.5%
Mental health services	25	23.1%
Food assistance (e.g., SNAP, WIC)	24	22.2%
Financial assistance/cash assistance	11	10.2%
Childcare (e.g., Head Start)	9	8.3%
Employment assistance	9	8.3%
Shelter and housing	8	7.4%
Utilities assistance	8	7.4%
Disability services	7	6.5%
Veteran's and military families services	6	5.6%
Child welfare (e.g., DCF)	5	4.6%
None of these	33	30.6%

Mental Health Challenges and Coping

Over nine in 10 respondents (94%) reported one or more health challenges, with over three-fourths reporting anxiety (60% diagnosed by a provider, 19% self-diagnosed) and over two-thirds reporting depression (50% provider-diagnosed, 17% self-diagnosed). Over one-third of respondents reported ADHD (22% provider-diagnosed, 13% self-diagnosed) and PTSD (21% provider-diagnosed, 13% self-diagnosed). Only 7% reported no mental health challenges.

Asked how they were addressing or coping with such challenges, the vast majority of respondents (95%) were taking one or more steps. (See Table 5.) About half of respondents (52%) were seeing a therapist and/or taking medication (47%). Approximately four in 10 were coping with mental health challenges by exercising (43%), engaging in hobbies (42%), or spending time with friends and family (37%).

Table 4. Mental health challenges and coping (N = 108)

Current mental health challenges	Diagnosed by provider		Self-diagnosed		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Depression	54	50.0%	18	16.7%	72	66.7%
Anxiety	65	60.2%	21	19.4%	86	79.6%
Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)	12	11.1%	6	5.6%	18	16.8%
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	23	21.3%	14	13.0%	37	34.3%
Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	24	22.2%	14	13.0%	38	35.2%
Bipolar Disorder	11	10.2%	2	1.9%	13	12.1%
Eating Disorder	5	4.6%	6	5.6%	11	10.2%

Current mental health challenges	Diagnosed by provider		Self-diagnosed		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Something else					5	4.6%
Autism	1	0.9%	2	1.9%	3	2.8%
Dissociative Identity Disorder	2	1.9%			2	1.9%
None of these/no mental health challenges					7	6.5%

Table 5. Coping with mental health challenges (N=108)

Coping mechanism	N	%
Seeing a therapist	56	51.9%
Seeing a psychiatrist	31	28.7%
Taking medication	51	47.2%
Attending a support group/group therapy	13	12.0%
Exercising	46	42.6%
Meditating	34	31.5%
Spending time with friends/family	40	37.0%
Engaging in hobbies	45	41.7%
Avoiding the news/media	25	23.1%
Spending time with pets	32	29.6%
Working	35	32.4%
Using alcohol or drugs	14	13.0%
N/A, none of these	5	4.6%

Impacts of the Trump Administration

Perceived Impacts on Children

Recognizing that some parents had young children, parents were asked whether they perceived their children as old enough to know about and be affected by Trump's re-election and presidency. Just under half (45%) of respondents indicated that their children were too young to be impacted. They sometimes explained their responses, stating, for example, "My child is only 4 years old and doesn't really have any concept of these political and social issues yet." Another parent said, "It has not affected them. They are still too young to understand political things." Yet another parent shared, "My children are mostly privileged and very young. They haven't been exposed to the horrors he has been committing in many ways."

Over half (55%) felt their children were old enough to understand and be affected by Trump's presidency. Among these parents, many described the multiple ways their children had been impacted by the current presidential administration's stance on transgender people. (See Table 6 for themes presented from most to least frequent.) They often emphasized how their children had been impacted by anti-transgender messages in their social environment, including at school, in the community, and in the media, including

social media. They described how these messages caused their children anxiety, to worry about safety, and to be hypervigilant. One parent said, “Trump’s re-election has absolutely increased the tension and fear in our household. Our older child has expressed anxiety after hearing about anti-trans laws and book bans. We’ve seen more open hostility in our local community since 2024, especially in school settings.” Another parent said, “They have been more stressed with all of the stuff that’s been in the news and on social media. They’ve been angry at him and at people who support him.”

In some cases, children’s anxieties reflected their intersecting marginalized identities, as nonbinary or transgender themselves, autistic, and/or of color. Some parents described how their children had been affected by bullying specifically, and a few reported that their children had become more politically and civically engaged—in part in response to family discussions and conversations (e.g., “about inclusion, fairness, and how national decisions can shape everyday experiences”).

Table 6. The impacts on children of the Trump administration’s stance on transgender people among respondents with children old enough to understand and be affected (N = 59)

Themes	Quotes
Anxiety and hypervigilance	“My son is very concerned/scared about what is going to happen to us, to him, to us as a family. He doesn’t want to see anyone hurt or for him to be taken away.” “It has made them more aware of discrimination and safety concerns. They have sensed the increased hostility in the political climate, especially with anti-trans laws targeting families like ours.” “It has increased my children’s exposure to fear, anxiety, and awareness of how different families are treated. My older child has started asking why some people hate families like ours and whether I’ll ‘get taken away.’ In our community, there’s been more visible tension and less trust in schools and public spaces.” “I know their mental health has suffered to some degree because of the ubiquity of political content on social media. We also live in a deep red state in which some of my child’s closest friends don’t share views on social and civil rights issues.”
Intersectional concerns	“I feel it has affected him because he knows that we are no longer protected by the government in the same way that we were. He is Asian, and he knows that they’ve changed virtually all laws against discrimination. Whether it be against people of color, women, the LGBT community, etc. I think he feels a bit less safe, which is hard for me to see as a parent.” “My child is even more anxious now, and is very angry at our country ... He’s autistic and has an IEP, so if Trump manages to actually gut the Department of Education, we’ll run up to problems on that front—but I do trust the school community here to have my child’s back if they do.” “I think it scares her, but she’s just a little too young to understand. I think she is aware enough that there are bad things going on in this world, and people like her and I are being targeted for either race, religion, sexual identity, or gender identity.”

Themes	Quotes
Discrimination, harassment, and bullying	"His re-election has brought more discrimination towards transgender people. This has affected my children being that their identities are always questioned and they face hostile environment both in school and society." "I had to take my children out of school and homeschool them due to bullying and being harassed."
Increased awareness of inequality and civil engagement	"It has increased their awareness of inequality and marginalization. They've sensed my heightened anxiety, and we've had more conversations about rights and resistance." "My child really enjoys being politically involved. She likes watching debates and going to protests. I try to share only what she wants to know, but I know she also takes in info from online sources, and the news is scary for all of us." "They have become more curious about advocacy and how people stand up for what's right."

Children's Mental Health

Among parents who felt their children were old enough to understand and be affected by Trump's presidency, when asked about changes in their children's anxiousness/fearfulness since Trump's re-election, over half (55%) said that they were more anxious/fearful, 10% said some children were more anxious/fearful and others were not, 27% said that they had observed no change, and 5% said they were less anxious/fearful. Three respondents did not answer the question, and one reported that their child was sometimes worried but not at other times. Overall, two-thirds of parents (66%) who perceived their children as old enough to be affected reported that at least one of their children was more anxious or fearful.

Parents who perceived no impact, positive impact, or different impacts on different children were asked to explain their responses. Of these parents, 63% said that their children were disengaged in or disinterested in politics, 38% said that they had shielded and/or protected their child from information they believed could be upsetting, and 4% said they agreed with at least some of the president's actions.

Children's Concerns

Among parents who felt their children were old enough to understand and be affected by Trump's presidency, over half (56%) reported that their children had expressed new worries or concerns about the election. Table 7 indicates the content of children's concerns since the election.

Table 7. Children's concerns since the 2024 election among respondents with children old enough to understand and be affected by the Trump presidency (N = 59)

Themes	Quotes	N	%
Worries about my safety, well-being, and health	"My elder child always worries about my rights to safety and equality." "My oldest has asked whether I can still go to the doctor, and why the laws don't protect "people like Daddy." These are hard conversations, and they started happening more after the election." "They've asked if I'll still be able to get the care I need, and if families like ours are still accepted."	9	15.3%
Fears of family safety, being "taken away" and family stability	"My child has asked more questions about whether I'm safe and whether our family could be separated or treated unfairly. They're more aware of politics now and sometimes express fear or confusion about what laws mean for us." "My child has asked questions like "Will you be taken away?" or "Are we still safe here?" after hearing about anti-trans legislation. It's heartbreaking." "My older child asked whether families like ours would still be allowed to stay together if laws keep changing. My younger one asked if people will always be mean to us for being different." "They have asked whether laws could separate us. They also ask more questions about fairness, discrimination, and why some people oppose families like ours." "My child has started asking if our family is 'safe' and whether people can take them away from me because of who I am. They've also asked why some people don't like families like ours, which has led to difficult but necessary conversations about fairness and identity."	9	15.3%
General worries, fears about safety and well-being	"My child is only 9, so he frequently asks "how much longer" will Trump be president. He also asks why Trump doesn't like us, that sort of thing. He has lots of questions, but I try to alleviate his worries by letting him know that we (our family) will keep us all safe." "My eldest daughter even at a young age is beginning to ask often more into the subject of 'why people are mean to families like ours.' The changes in language and attitude in media and some public spheres seem to register emotionally with them, even though they may not grasp the politics behind it." "They've expressed worries about whether they will be accepted and protected, especially in environments like school or community spaces."	10	16.9%

Themes	Quotes	N	%
A variety of social-political concerns (economic, housing, wars, etc.)	"My children regularly ask my partner and I about various policies, wars, genocides, and other current social and political issues going on globally. We speak very openly about these events and laws in our home to educate and protect our kids as best as we can, and advocate for them to also stand up for others who may be oppressed or harmed at any level." "They fear for their financial futures and rights they may have or lose because of his policies and the people he has installed to government positions."	8	13.6%
Worries about having to move and traveling	"They have asked about whether our family will be safe, if we'll need to move." "He's concerned we would be attacked if we were to travel."	4	6.8%

Responding to Children's Concerns

Respondents were asked how they aimed to address or mitigate their children's concerns. (See Table 8.) Among parents who felt their children were old enough to understand or be affected by the Trump presidency, many described communications strategies that emphasized three key components: a) acknowledging, validating, and processing their children's concerns, b) reassuring their children that their families were safe, and c) promising to advocate for their children and families. Less often, parents emphasized only one or two of these components; some parents of mostly young children emphasized reassurance only, and some parents of mostly older children focused mainly on acknowledging and processing concerns and emotions. Other responses focused on providing information, building children's self-esteem, cultivating open communication, and offering a historical perspective on what was happening in the United States.

Table 8. Parents' responses to children's worries and concerns among respondents with children old enough to understand and be affected by the Trump presidency (N = 59)

Themes	Quotes	N	%
Acknowledging and processing concerns, providing reassurances of safety, and promising to protect and advocate	"I explain things in an age-appropriate way, focusing on values like fairness, kindness, and resilience. I reassure them that they are safe and that we can always speak up and support those who are being treated unfairly. These conversations help ease their worries and encourage critical thinking and empathy." "I talk to my children about their concerns when they come up. I reassure them that our family is safe and loved, and I remind them that there are many people working hard to make sure all families like ours are protected and respected."	18	30.5%

Themes	Quotes	N	%
Acknowledging and processing concerns, providing reassurances of safety, and promising to protect and advocate	"I reassure them that our family is strong, that I will always protect them, and that there are many people and communities fighting for fairness and love—even when it feels like the world is uncertain." "Yes, there are some laws being passed that aren't fair, and I understand why you might feel scared or angry. You have every right to feel that way. But I want you to know that I will always stand up for you and for what's right." "I make it a priority to talk openly with my children about their concerns. When they share their worries, I listen carefully and validate their feelings, letting them know it's okay to feel uncertain or scared sometimes. I reassure them that they are loved and supported no matter what, and that together we will face challenges as a family. I also try to empower them by discussing ways to stay safe, stand up for themselves, and seek help when needed."		
Acknowledging and processing concerns, providing reassurances of safety	"We discuss the things that happen and I try to make sure they know there are limits to what he can actually do for some items to alleviate concerns." "I talk to them about their concerns and I reassure them that everything is going to be okay."	5	8.5%
Providing reassurances of safety (mainly young children)	"When my child may be concerned, I comfort her/him and give an age-appropriate explanation to make her/him feel safe." "I tell him that we're in a shitty place right now and things suck but the area we live in is pretty decent and well protected. I reassure him that we have the community we need to be safe. I reassure him that he'll be safe." "I mostly reassure him that our family is ok, and I do try to limit his news consumption, as well as what he hears from friends and family. It's really not something I want him to worry about or even think about. He is only 9, for the most part I just reassure him that we are ok." "I talk to them about their concerns and I reassure them that everything is going to be okay"	5	8.5%
Promising to protect and advocate	"I tell them we are going to fight back and won't lie down!" "We talk about ways we can make meaningful change." "I tell them I will always be there to protect them as best as I can until they can protect themselves."	7	11.9%

Themes	Quotes	N	%
Acknowledging and processing concerns (mainly older children)	"Always, I don't hold anything back. They're old enough to process these feelings of anger and helplessness that can be redirected into kindness towards others." "I listen to her concerns, support and validate her emotions and try to help her talk through them." "We reassure his feelings are valid and do what we can to express our concerns as well and come up with game plans." "I affirm their emotions and we talk about them." "We are affirming to her fears and talk through some solutions. We have also gotten her into therapy."	10	16.9%
Answering questions and providing information	"I always answer any questions they have in an age-appropriate way." "I respond to their questions with honesty and age-appropriate clarity." "I try to explain to them in layman terms using toys or cartoons they watch." "I keep it age appropriate, use storybooks, affirming messages, and conversations that reinforce love, safety, and the value of diversity."	10	16.9%
Focusing on "building them up"	"I tell my children that everyone is different but still human and they should be proud of who they are." "I tell my children to embrace who they are and nobody's opinion defines them." "The general message my partner and I try to instill in our children is that they are deeply worthy, cared for, loved, and fought for even as many try to fight against them and their joy and existence." "I usually advise her to be her authentic self: to be whatever she wants to be as long as she is being completely authentic doing it."	6	10.2%
Encouraging open communication	"I would but they do not wish to talk about it. I offer support and wisdom, but let them figure it out themselves." "We do talk to him since he is a teenager so he understands what's going on and his rights. Any time he sees a video on TikTok or whatever, we encourage him to discuss it with us." "I believe it's important to create an open, honest, and emotionally safe space where they feel heard and supported. Then respond with honesty that matches their age and emotional understanding."	5	8.5%

Themes	Quotes	N	%
Providing historical perspective	"Yes, we explain our values as a family. We explain what's going on honestly and give historical context and hope that things will be better and that we can be good people still." "I try to affirm my first that nothing bad will happen to me and that a day is coming when the LGBTQ community will no longer face discrimination."	2	3.4%

Guidance and Precautions Surrounding Safety

Among all respondents, most parents (87%) described at least one change in how they approach safety regarding their children since Trump's re-election, with many emphasizing multiple strategies or adjustments. (See Table 9.) These strategies included seeking to a) limit visibility and information sharing (i.e., guiding their children in selective disclosure about their parents and family to minimize who and what people knew about them), b) limit social interactions (i.e., limit the places and people their children are exposed to), and c) support their children in developing skills for self-protection. In these ways, they sought to enhance their children's safety and well-being.

Among those who did not describe changes in how they approached safety, a few respondents explained that they lived in trans-friendly regions and communities ("I live in California, so I'm not that affected"; "I feel safe enough in my community not to change any safety-related rules for my children"). Additionally, a few respondents said that their children were "too young to go anywhere without a parent." A few respondents explained that they had "always been strict about safety."

Table 9. Strategies for enhancing children's safety (N = 91)

Theme	Quotes
Limiting visibility and information-sharing (how open we are)	"I've become more cautious about where my child goes, who they're around, and how openly they can talk about our family especially in unfamiliar environments." "I now emphasize the importance of staying in known, affirming spaces, avoiding conversations about our family with strangers, and never going anywhere alone without informing a trusted adult. We discuss digital privacy, racial and gender bias, and what to do if approached by police or officials. These rules are heartbreaking to enforce—but necessary in this political climate." "I'm more cautious about where they go, how visible we are as a queer/trans family, and even what they say at school. We've talked about using discretion with certain topics outside the home—not out of shame, but for safety. I never thought I'd need to teach my child to "code-switch" to protect our family, but that's where we are." "[We talk about] what to do if someone questions their pronouns or identity in public or at school. How to handle invasive or hostile questions from adults."

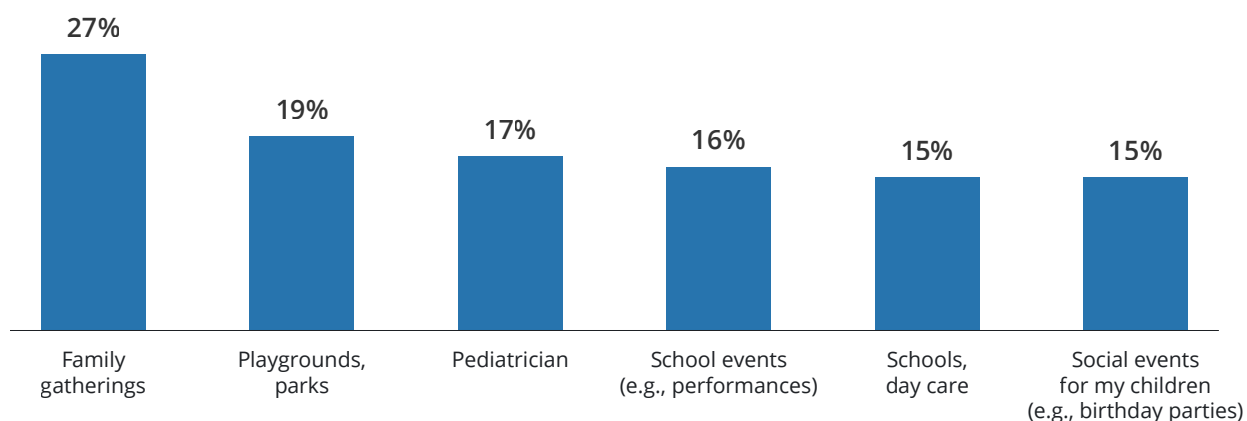
Theme	Quotes
Limiting visibility and information-sharing (how open we are)	"I've become more protective about where they go, who they're around, and how openly they discuss their identity, especially in school or public spaces." "We encourage our children to not debate or disagree with adults in public if those adults seem to support Trump or his policies because we don't want our children to be bullied or targeted for mistreatment." "We are more cautious now. We've emphasized not outing themselves or our family unnecessarily in unsafe settings. We've changed some of our routines—like avoiding certain public events or traveling to specific states—and we're considering homeschooling if policies worsen locally. It's a balance between protecting them and still fostering their confidence and identity."
Limiting social interactions (where and with whom)	"It has made us more wary of interacting with her friends' parents and letting her go out without an adult." "One of my children, who is an appropriate age to wander the neighborhood alone or with friends, is no longer allowed to do so because we're worried they won't come home." "My child is mixed and has a transgender dad. If we can help it, we avoid establishments that support Trump. We have also had to cut ties with a friend of his because his friend unfortunately had parents who did not approve of my gender identity and would bad mouth me in front of my child. If my son asks to go to specific places, I research it first to make sure it will be a safe space for all of us." "We are far more protective and watchful of where we go and who we do playdates with." "We are homeschoolers, so we've had to talk about the different types of homeschoolers, and make sure the parents aren't Trumpers or members of a discriminatory church before becoming besties for safety reasons." "I know a few of the religious fanatic parents at school and rather than cause my kids stress from those conflicts, I try to avoid them or present differently when I know they will be around." "Unfortunately, our circle has become a dot in the past few years, and our family feels all too often like we only have ourselves. Of course, we have a few friends and family members still around, but none that have similar experiences or identities; therefore, we operate largely as a small family unit despite the deep yearning for community and care."
Building safety skills	"I have emphasized my child's 5th amendment rights so he knows that he shouldn't answer questions from police or other adults without first contacting his parents." "I would have probably wanted them in martial arts anyway, but as they get older, it has become a way to better ensure their safety by increasing their self-confidence, especially as they look to go off to college."

Some parents sought to fully avoid certain family-oriented spaces and events such as family gatherings (27%), playgrounds and parks (19%), pediatricians' offices (17%), school events (16%), schools and day care (15%), and social events for children such as birthday parties (15%), with 45% of parents seeking to avoid at least one of these contexts. (See Table 10.)

Table 10. Planned avoidance of child/family contexts (N = 108)

Do you intend to avoid the following during the Trump administration?	Intend to avoid		Do not intend to avoid		Missing
	N	%	N	%	N
Playgrounds, parks	20	19.0%	85	81.0%	3
Schools, day care	15	15.2%	84	84.8%	9
School events (e.g., performances)	15	16.0%	79	84.0%	14
Social events for my children (e.g., birthday parties)	16	15.4%	88	84.6%	4
Pediatrician	17	17.0%	83	83.0%	8
Family gatherings	28	27.2%	75	72.8%	5

Figure 1. Percent of respondents intending to avoid certain family/child contexts during the Trump administration



Actions Taken in Response to the Trump Administration

Respondents were asked whether they had taken various actions in response to Trump's re-election and presidency, with some providing elaboration and explanation of these actions. (See Table 11.) Actions encompassed expansive strategies (e.g., legal protections, limiting visibility), proactive strategies (e.g., advocacy), and escape strategies (e.g., homeschooling, relocating).

Over one-third (39%) of parents reported taking steps to limit or reduce their family's visibility in public and on social media due to safety concerns. On the other hand, over one-third (37%) of parents had taken steps to expand their children's exposure to LGBTQ content and communities, and one-third (34%) had become more involved in LGBTQ-related advocacy themselves. About one in five (19%) were considering a move to a different state or country. Just one in five (19%) said that they had made no changes.

Table 11. Actions taken to protect children in response to Trump's re-election (N = 108)

Because of Trump's re-election and presidency...	Explanation/elaboration	N	%
Protective			
I have limited my family's visibility (e.g., on social media, in public spaces) out of safety concerns	"The political climate and rising transphobia have made me more cautious in public and online. I feel like I'm constantly scanning for threats." "I've limited my 'outness' in public spaces, especially in church related settings. We still go to church, but I've explained that we cannot disclose that I am part of the LGBT community. He seems to understand." "We have had to be more cautious about our visibility as a family in certain public spaces, and I've consciously limited social media sharing that might identify us. The broader climate necessitates a heightened awareness and more protective approach to their daily lives." "We avoid certain events, public spaces, and limit social media exposure. I emphasize awareness, personal safety, and careful judgment about disclosure of family details." "[We talk about] when it's safe to be fully expressive (e.g., wearing Pride gear in certain towns)."	42	38.9%
I pursued additional legal safeguards for my relationship with my children (if relevant; n = 13 said n/a)		29	29.6%
Expansive			
I have increased my child/ren's exposure to LGBTQ+ affirming media, spaces, and communities	"Awareness of the LGBTQ+ community to my children is crucial since that is part of their life." "I have tried to make sure my children get healthy representation of LGBT families from shows such as Sesame Street."	40	37.0%
I am more involved in advocacy, community organizing, or mutual aid to protect LGBTQ+ families	"I work as a therapist at a community agency that includes an LGBT+ advocacy program. I'm the only openly queer and gender-nonconforming therapist in the therapeutic program at this time. I assist in the annual Pride fundraiser and LGBT+ training and education." "I'm more involved in advocacy and community organizing to help protect LGBTQ+ families, as I feel a stronger responsibility to stand up for vulnerable communities."	37	34.3%

Because of Trump's re-election and presidency...	Explanation/elaboration	N	%
I have talked more explicitly with my child/ren about discrimination and civil rights	"I certainly have more conversations about civil rights [and] the importance of standing up for oneself and others." "I always feel that I have to prepare my kids for the stigma they might face due to my sexuality. I have to keep reassuring them that there is nothing wrong with them." "I had to prepare both myself and my family for any negative future laws and social interactions."	42	38.9%
Escape			
I am considering moving to a different state/country for my family's safety or legal protection	"We are moving from Texas to Maryland." "I want to move to a more liberal state." "We are going to move so our family is safe and have more children in a different, safer space."	20	18.5%
I have decided to homeschool or change my child/ren's school to ensure a safer/more affirming environment	"I decided to homeschool my children rather than exposing them to scrutiny."	16	14.8%
No changes			
I have not made any changes to my parenting choices or behaviors as a result of the election	"I really haven't seen much actual change regarding either of these in my personal life. It feels more like media hype."	21	19.4%

Respondents were also asked about a variety of behaviors that were not specifically focused on their children, but rather actions they may have taken or were considering taking to protect themselves and their families. (See Table 12.) The most common actions participants had already taken were learning more about their rights (70%), buying personal safety devices (38%), and pursuing additional legal safeguards for their relationship (25%). The most common actions they were considering were self-defense classes (54%) and pursuing additional legal safeguards (34%).

Table 12. Actions to protect self and family in response to Trump's re-election (N = 108)

Since Trump was elected, have you taken any of the following actions in an effort to protect yourself or your family?	Yes, I did this		Considering this		No		N/A
Safety/self defense actions	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Learned about my rights related to safety and discrimination	76	70.4%	20	18.5%	12	11.1%	0
Pursued self-defense classes	20	18.9%	57	53.8%	29	27.4%	2
Bought pepper spray or a personal alarm/safety device	41	38.3%	28	26.2%	38	35.5%	1
Legal actions							
Changed or updated my state ID	17	16.3%	26	25.0%	61	58.7%	4
Met or consulted with legal professionals	23	21.9%	32	30.5%	50	47.6%	3
Pursued (additional) legal safeguards for my relationship with my partner	25	24.8%	34	33.7%	42	41.6%	7

Explaining Actions and Inactions

In explaining their responses to actions they were or were not taking regarding safety, some respondents emphasized that they felt strongly about not allowing hostile individuals or legislation to prevent them from leading full and meaningful lives. As one participant shared, "I am not stopping myself from living my life because of bigots in this country. My and my family's lives matter too." Others downplayed the significance of Trump's policies for them personally, saying, "I don't have too many safety concerns." Others noted that they had not noticed any major negative shifts yet, at least in their own communities: "I'm in a very conservative area, but I haven't noticed any real changes. I just try to be 'me,' and I don't talk about any details about my life outside of my small social group. I just haven't seen any changes outside of media."

Others, though, shared their concerns, underscoring their feelings of vulnerability and uncertainty (e.g., "society is unpredictable"; "I feel I need to protect my kid at all costs"). As one participant shared, "I'm constantly aware of how being visibly trans and queer affects my safety and how my child may be impacted." Another participant recounted, "Just yesterday, my neighbor was outside talking to another neighbor about how nonbinary people are a danger to society and shouldn't be allowed around children." In turn, they had taken steps to enhance their safety, including pursuing legal safeguards and becoming more involved in their communities. One participant said, "I fear losing parental rights. I filed for adoption and legal guardianship." Another said, "I feel that I should take all necessary measures to ensure the safety of my spouse and children." Another participant shared, "I've taken steps like attending local school board meetings, staying more informed about local politics, and participating in neighborhood groups that support diversity and mutual aid."

Others indicated that they had already taken several steps to enhance their safety prior to Trump's election. One participant said, "I ensured that all of my documents prove who I am and also [my relationship with] my child, and I liaised with law enforcement to ensure my security." Another participant said, "I married my partner before Trump was elected."

Calculating Risk in the Service of Safety: Navigating Visibility

Some respondents reported taking steps to reduce their visibility, at least in certain settings, in order to enhance their safety. One participant shared, “If I feel unsafe to be out as LGBT, then I just pretend to be ‘just a tomboy’ rather than agender/asexual. If I am in a place where I feel accepted and safe, I can be myself.” Some sought to avoid specific communities and events where they or their children might be at enhanced risk: “I intend to avoid public protests and conservative-leaning towns ... safety feels like something I now have to plan for in every decision.” Another participant shared, “Everything I do is driven by protecting the emotional and physical safety of my children,” which meant calculating “[where] we shop, hang around, how visible we are as a queer family.”

Navigating the dance between visibility and closeting in the service of safety was often stressful, inhibiting participants’ sense of authenticity, freedom, and well-being. One participant shared, “The growing hostility has heightened our anxiety about public visibility, even in everyday activities. I’ve taken legal steps to protect myself and my family, but the uncertainty remains constant.” Another participant said:

My daily life now includes calculating safety risks in even the most mundane places, like a playground or grocery store. I’ve avoided medical settings out of fear of being judged or misgendered, even when care was needed. I’ve spent time creating a legal safety net for myself and my child, and while it’s empowering in one sense, it’s also deeply unfair that our family must go to such lengths just to feel somewhat protected. Friends and family have supported me, but even they express worry about how visible I am. I do my best to stay strong and connected, but the anxiety is constant.

Another participant, similarly, shared that they had experienced “significant ... fear and vigilance” since the 2024 election, adding:

My partner and I finalized legal protections for each other and our child, including adoption and power of attorney. I avoid restrooms and certain public spaces. We’ve discussed relocating. I’ve also joined local advocacy groups to support others in the community who may not have the resources we do.

Impact of the Trump Administration on Family Planning

One significant way that Trump’s election had affected some respondents was in their family-planning and parenting intentions. One-third (33%) indicated that, because of Trump’s re-election and presidency, they were planning to have fewer children. (See Table 13.) As one participant shared, “As a nonbinary and Black parent in the U.S. ... I can say the rise in anti-trans and anti-Black sentiment, along with legal rollbacks, has made me more cautious about expanding my family.” Additionally, 13% indicated that their plans had changed in other ways (e.g., the timing or route to parenthood).

Table 13. Impact of Trump presidency on parenting choices and family planning (N = 108)

Because of Trump’s re-election and presidency...	N	%
I plan to have fewer children	36	33.3%
I plan to have children in a different way than I expected	4	3.7%
I plan to have children more quickly/speed up the timing	5	4.6%
I plan to have children more slowly/slow down my timeline	5	4.6%

Conclusion

Transgender parents reported that their children, who are old enough to understand the rhetoric and policies of the Trump presidency, are experiencing anxiety and fear, including about their parents and their own safety and well-being. These fears strike to the very heart of these families' security and stability: for some, what is at stake is not a set of negative impacts on their family, but whether their family will survive the Trump presidency intact. A number of parents reported that their children were concerned that they would be taken away from their families and that their families would have to move, or would be discriminated against, harassed, or attacked. In the words of one respondent, "My child has started asking if our family is 'safe' and whether people can take them away from me because of who I am." Another participant said, "I fear losing my parental rights." One-third of transgender parents who responded to our survey reported that, because of the Trump presidency, they were planning to have fewer children.

In response to the significant pressures of the Trump presidency, transgender parents are limiting their outness as transgender and nonbinary people and the visibility of their families, avoiding public spaces that are important to children and families, including schools, playgrounds, and pediatrician offices, and even considering moving to safer communities. Some of these parents are having to re-closet themselves and their families and explain why that is necessary to their children after trying to instill in them pride in who they are and the power of being visible. In the words of one respondent, "We are more cautious now. We've emphasized not outing themselves or our family unnecessarily in unsafe settings. We've changed some of our routines—like avoiding certain public events or traveling to specific states—and we're considering homeschooling if policies worsen locally. It's a balance between protecting them and still fostering their confidence and identity."

For many, the survey responses reveal a group of families that are increasingly isolated and alone. In the words of one respondent, "Unfortunately, our circle has become a dot in the past few years, and our family feels all too often like we only have ourselves."

Many survey respondents are also taking concrete actions to support their children and protect their families in response to the Trump presidency. These strategies include talking with their children about their concerns, reassuring them as much as possible, and teaching them about their rights and civil rights more generally. Transgender parents also reported strengthening legal protections for their families, learning more about self-defense and safety, and increasing their families' engagement with the LGBTQ community and advocacy.

In the face of significant pressures, many respondents are drawing on their family's values, the past, and hope for the future. In the words of some of these respondents,

The general message my partner and I try to instill in our children is that they are deeply worthy, cared for, loved, and fought for, even as many try to fight against them and their joy and existence.

We explain our values as a family. We explain what's going on honestly and give historical context, and hope that things will be better and that we can be good people still.

Methodology

Participants ($N = 108$)—all transgender and/or nonbinary identified parents—were recruited via Prolific, an online recruitment platform that uses specialized targeting techniques to share surveys to pre-registered respondents. Respondents who (a) designated their gender as “transgender woman,” “transgender man,” “transgender,” or “nonbinary,” (b) lived in the U.S., and (c) were the parent of at least one child under 18, were invited to participate in an anonymous survey between June 19 and July 14, 2025. All respondents underwent an identity check by Prolific to ensure they were valid participants. The survey was hosted on the online platform Qualtrics and took an average of 43 minutes to complete ($SD = 19.4$ minutes).

The survey questions, which included closed- and open-ended items, were informed by the authors’ knowledge of the relevant literature and our prior research on related topics, as well as input from colleagues with relevant expertise. Closed-ended items were often accompanied by requests for elaboration and explanation. In addition, a number of free-standing open-ended items were included. Data analysis involved basic descriptive statistics and qualitative content analysis, which involved careful exploration of themes or patterns in the data and systematic organization of these themes into a coherent, organized, and structured narrative that best accounts for the data. Two research assistants coded portions of the open-ended data in order to provide validation checks for basic themes and theme counts.

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