

V'asu li Mikdash: Caring for our LGBTQ+ Community

January 15, 2025 | 15 Tevet, 5785



**RECONSTRUCTING
JUDAISM**

Deeply rooted. Boldly relevant.

keshet
קשת

For LGBTQ+
equality in
Jewish life

Keshet works for the full equality

of all LGBTQ+ Jews and our families in Jewish life. We strengthen Jewish communities. We equip Jewish organizations with the skills and knowledge to build LGBTQ+ affirming communities, create spaces in which all queer Jewish youth feel seen and valued, and advance LGBTQ+ rights nationwide.



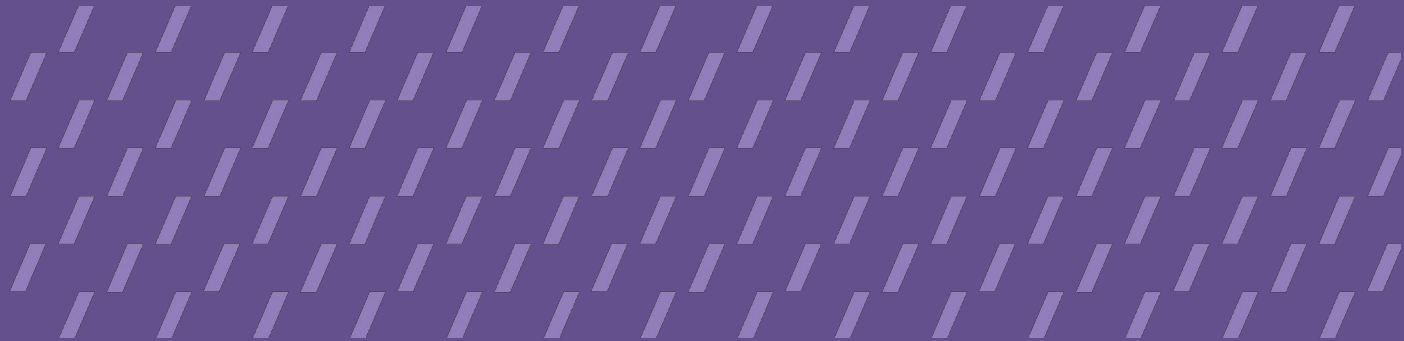
Agenda:

- Welcome & Introduction
- Legislative 2025 Impact on the LGBTQ+ Community
- Care through Action
- Q&A

What brings me (a Recon Rabbi) to this work:

- Grew up without gender expansive models of rabbinic leadership or LGBTQ+ affirming communities
- Potential to reconstruct liturgy and ritual and radically reimagine theology
- Reconstructing Judaism as the tugboat of the Jewish world

2025 Legislation's Impact on the LGBTQ+ Community



▼ [2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION](#)

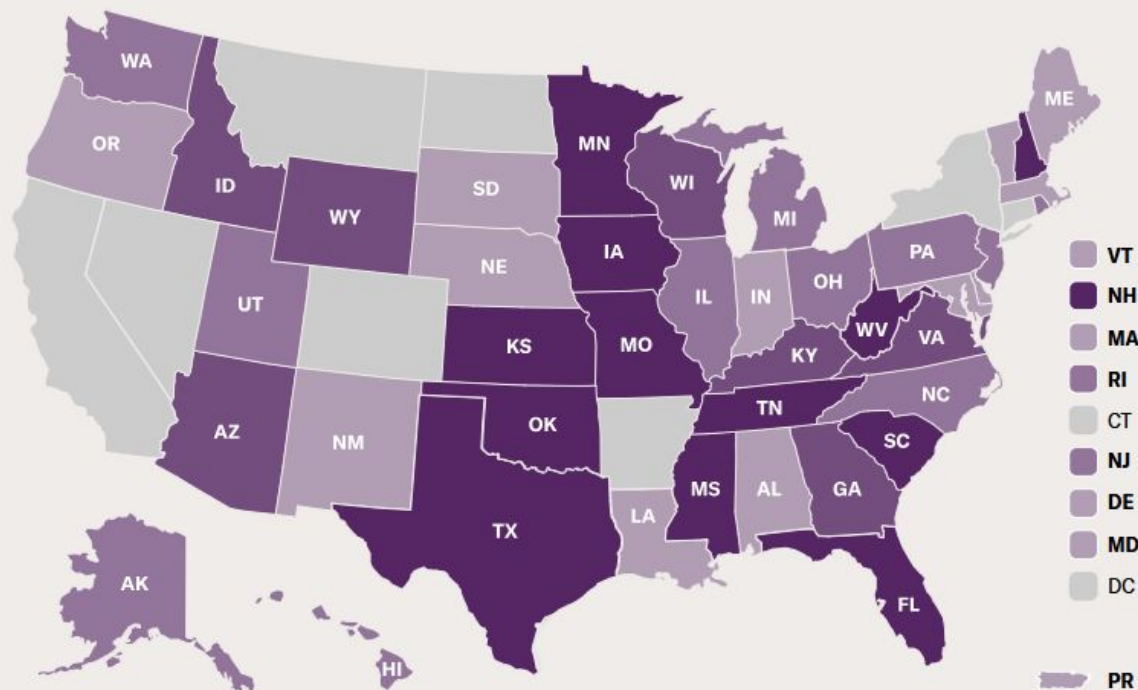
The ACLU is tracking **576** anti-LGBTQ bills in the U.S.

Choose a state on the map to show the different bills targeting LGBTQ rights and take action.

While not all of these bills will become law, they all cause harm for LGBTQ people.

Last updated on December 6, 2024 ⓘ

Bills per state



Important lessons:

- Anti-trans bills are being pushed by party leadership and PACs, NOT voters
 - Strategy: emphasize de-prioritization of anti-trans bills in order to serve voters
- Our attention is valuable
 - Anti-trans riders in unrelated bills, large barrages of anti-trans bills, quick hearing and voting timelines: all are designed make it harder to notice anti-trans legislation
 - Strategy: keep paying attention, even when it's hard
- People need something to fight FOR, not just against
 - Strategy: emphasize the future we want, even in the face of negative legislation

2025 Legislative Landscape: States

While many bills in 2024 were defeated, hundreds of bills are already prefiled for 2025 indicating more of the same:

- Attempts to criminalize and ban gender affirming health care
- Preventing trans people from obtaining correct identity documents
- Bans on books and drag performances
- Bans on participating in sports
- Attacks on inclusive school policies surrounding gender identity, bathroom use, and censoring discussion of LGBTQ+ topics
- Elimination of DEI departments in state institutions

Keshet Project 2025 Explainer

"Families comprised of a married mother, father, and their children are the foundation of a well-ordered nation and healthy society. . . . The male-female dyad is essential to human nature and . . . every child has a right to a mother and father."

— Project 2025

"Look at America under the ruling and cultural elite today. . . . Children suffer the toxic normalization of transgenderism with drag queens and pornography invading their school libraries."

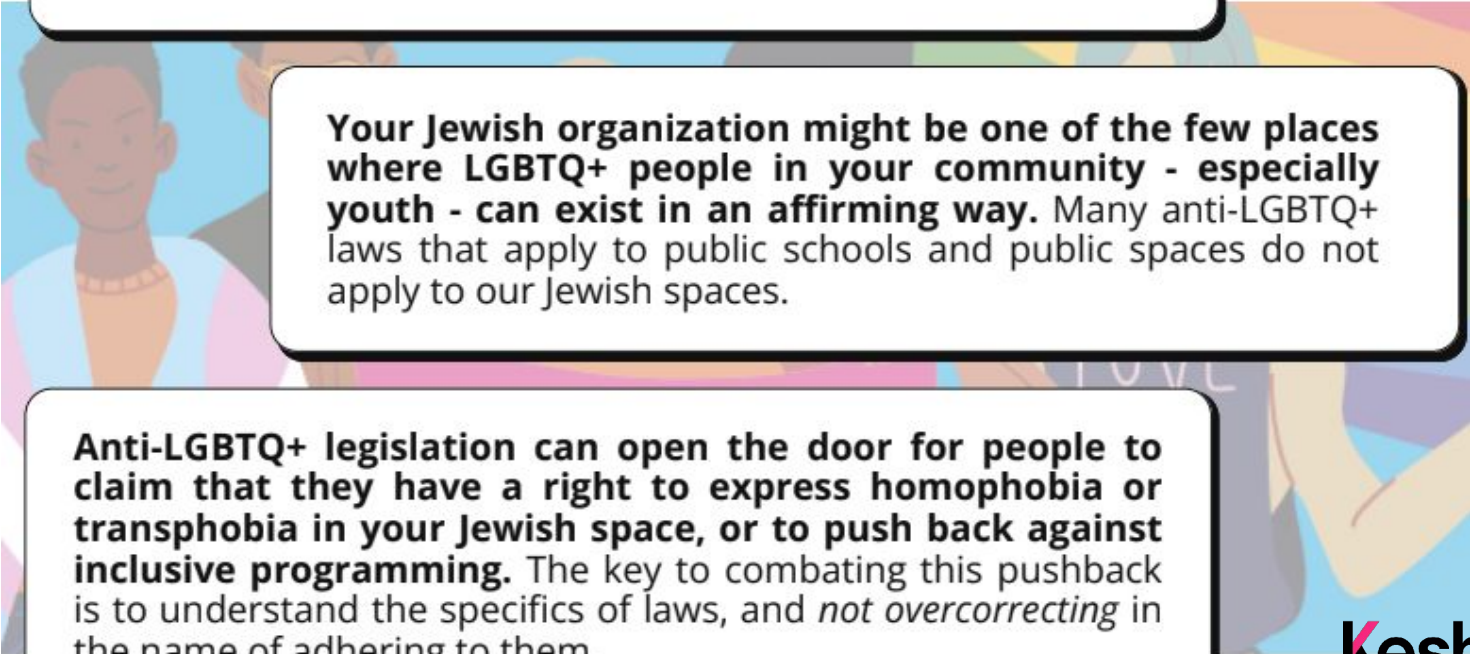
— Project 2025

www.keshetonline.org/resources/keshet-project-2025-explainer

Why does Jewish support for LGBTQ+ rights and nondiscrimination protections matter?

No one should face discrimination because of who they are, who they love, or where they live. But in a majority of states, LGBTQ+ people remain vulnerable to discrimination, and people are really hurting.

So often religion is used as an argument against LGBTQ+ rights and protections and that is why it is so important for us to speak up as Jews and say that it is not despite our religion that we support LGBTQ+ protections but **because** it is a part of our religious values to do what is right.

A background illustration featuring stylized, colorful portraits of diverse individuals, including a woman with short dark hair and a man with a beard, set against a backdrop of geometric shapes in shades of blue, orange, and pink.

Jewish organizations, such as synagogues, Hebrew schools, camps, and day schools, are *private religious institutions*. For better or for worse, there are limits to the extent that the government can regulate your programs and policies.

Your Jewish organization might be one of the few places where LGBTQ+ people in your community - especially youth - can exist in an affirming way. Many anti-LGBTQ+ laws that apply to public schools and public spaces do not apply to our Jewish spaces.

Anti-LGBTQ+ legislation can open the door for people to claim that they have a right to express homophobia or transphobia in your Jewish space, or to push back against inclusive programming. The key to combating this pushback is to understand the specifics of laws, and *not overcorrecting* in the name of adhering to them.

LGBTQ+ nondiscrimination is extremely popular

81% of American Jews support LGBTQ+ nondiscrimination

Majority support holds across party lines:

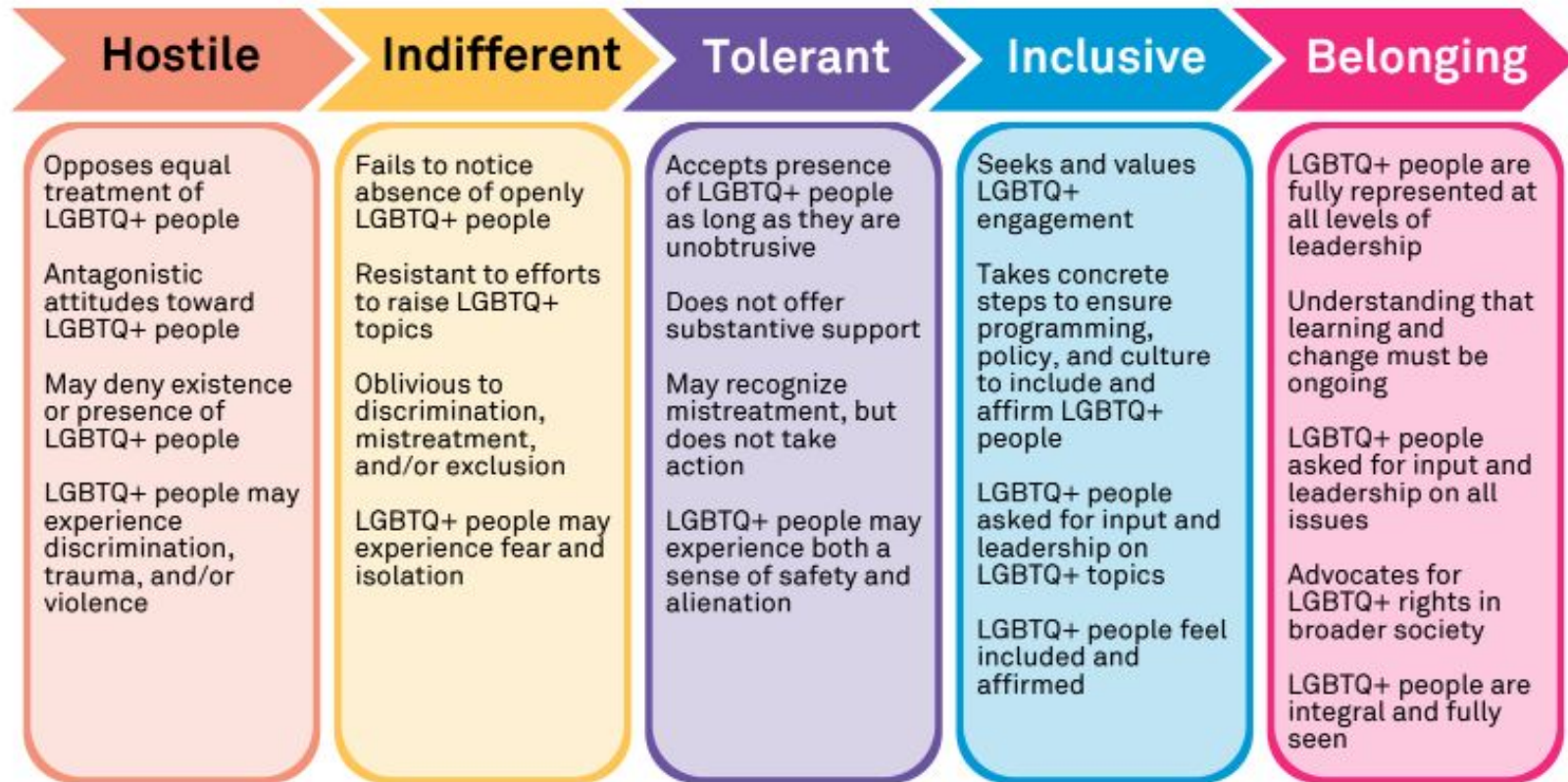
- 89% of Democrats support LGBTQ+ nondiscrimination
- 78% of Independents support LGBTQ+ nondiscrimination
- 59% of Republicans support LGBTQ+ nondiscrimination

(PRRI, 2023)

2/3 of Americans oppose laws that would limit transgender rights

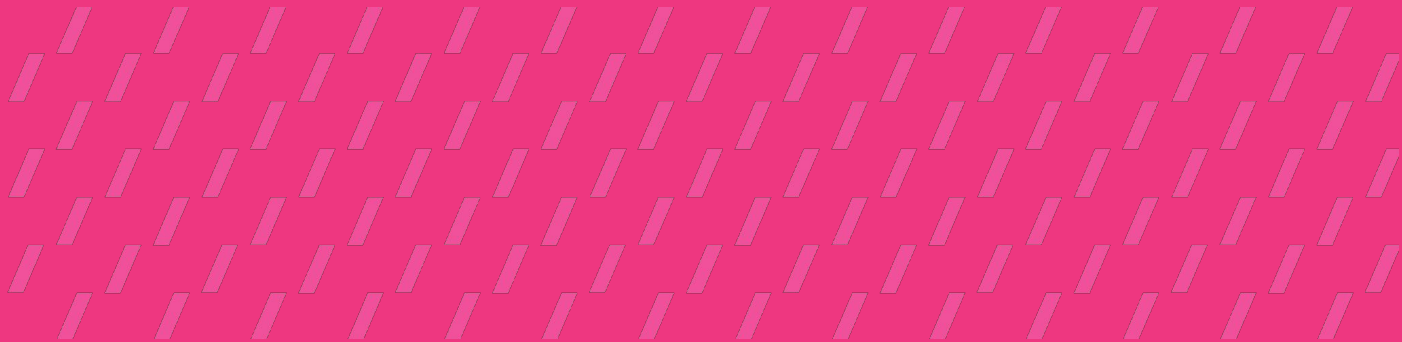
(PBS/NPR/Marist, 2021)

The Spectrum of Belonging



Adapted from *Teaching for Diversity & Social Justice*, ed. Adams, Bell & Griffin (2007)

Shivyon: Keshet's Equality Project Cohort



What is Shivyon: Keshet's Equality Project?



The Shivyon cohort is a **year-long, cohort-based** project of **training, consultation, and learning** in partnership
Reconstructing Judaism

The Shivyon Cohort Year

Assess

Act

Learn

Grow!

The Shivyon Cohort Year

Assess

- Develop a congregational working group of 2-4 individuals on the leadership level
- The working group will be guided through an organizational self-assessment of LGBTQ+-affirming programming, policies, and culture.

Learn

- Participate in Keshet's 2-part virtual Day of Learning cohort launch and connect with other Reconstructing Judaism congregations participating in the cohort
- Develop an organizational Action Plan

The Shivyon Cohort Year

Act

- Implement organizational Action Plan through consultation with Keshet through five coaching calls where organizations will receive individualized support, resources, and problem-solving related to their action plan.
- Participate in two cohort conversations centered on peer workshopping as a congregational cohort

Grow!

- End the year long cohort year with a cohort closing and certificate of completion and digital safe zone sticker
- Become empowered to create sustained change for LGBTQ+ equality by developing independence and confidence to identify ongoing goals

How much does it cost?

Flat fee of \$360 per congregation

This includes coaching sessions, cohort conversations, Keshet themed swag and ongoing support for your organization's working group.

Finances should not be a barrier to participation, please reach out if so!

Important Dates

Keshet Shivyon Equality Project for Reconstructionist Congregations



Applications are **now open** and are being reviewed on a rolling basis!

Launches with a 2-part virtual
Day of Learning:
February 27 and March 6

keshetonline.org/shivyon

In partnership:

Keshet
קשת

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Living Our Values, Cultivating Hope

קִיָּה אֶל-יְהוָה חֲזַק וַיֵּאמֶץ לְבָבִי וְקִיָּה אֶל-יְהוָה

“Look to Adonai, be strong and of good courage! Look to Adonai.” - Psalm 27

“Hope for Adonai, and if your prayer is not accepted, reinforce your hope.” - Rashi

“On a similar note, Rabbi Hama, son of Rabbi Hanina, said: A person who prayed and saw that he was not answered should pray again, as it is stated: ‘Hope in the Lord, strengthen yourself, let your heart take courage, and hope in the Lord’ (Psalms 27:14). One should turn to God with hope, and if necessary turn to God again with hope.” - Berakhot 32b

Taking Action as Jewish Organizations

- ❑ Champion your organization's inclusive policies - once policies are in place, be ready to vocally stand up for your community
- ❑ Be an affirming place for LGBTQ+ and trans youth
- ❑ Mobilize your local congregation and community to contact elected officials: local, state, federal
- ❑ Educate yourself and your community on how to be an ally to the LGBTQ+ community
- ❑ Join Keshet in our work to cultivate a place of belonging in Jewish life for LGBTQ+ individuals and our loved ones!

Q&A

