



GUIDE

What to Know About Booking Business Travel to Florida Amid Growth of Anti-LGBTQ+ Laws

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Anti-LGBTQ+ Laws Are Increasing in Florida

Background

As of [May 2023](#), more than 540 anti-LGBTQ+ bills have been introduced in state legislatures, over 220 of which specifically target transgender and nonbinary people, and 45 anti-LGBTQ laws have been enacted so far this year in the United States.

In Florida, [several 2023 anti-LGBTQ+ laws](#) are under review or already enacted, [building upon the action taken in 2022](#). According to the [ACLU](#), these laws include:

- [HB 991](#): Defamation, False Light, and Unauthorized Publication of Name or Likenesses**
 - Would establish that journalistic privilege does not apply to defamation claims when the defendant is a professional journalist or media entity and that a public figure would not need to show actual malice (the idea that someone acted on information they knew to be false) to prevail in a defamation suit. The bill would also establish the presumption that a statement by an anonymous source is presumptively false. Puts forth exemptions for discrimination based on religion or scientific beliefs.
 - This could impact LGBTQ+ individual's ability to make discrimination claims because a defendant may claim their discriminatory actions are based on religious or scientific beliefs about sex and gender.
 - Status: Introduced
- [HB 1069](#): Education**
 - Allows sex education only for students in grades 6 through 12 and defines sex as "the binary division of individuals based upon reproductive function" in Florida's state curriculum. Educators will not be allowed to tell students their preferred pronouns or ask students their preferred pronouns. Anyone in the school district will be able to object to and request the removal of any book or learning materials that describe any sexual conduct.
 - Status: Passed into law
- [HB 1223](#): Public Pre K-12 Educational Institution and Instruction Requirements**
 - Building upon the bill known as "[Don't Say Gay](#)," this law bans classroom discussion of gender identity (nonbinary identities and gender pronoun usage) and sexual orientation from pre-K through eighth grade. It also limits discussion in grades 8 and up to "age appropriate" topics. The topics deemed "age appropriate" will be determined by Florida's Department of Education.
 - Status: Introduced
- [SB 1320](#): Child Protection in Public Schools**
 - Allows sex education only for students in grades 6 and up and defines sex as "the binary division of individuals based upon reproductive function" in Florida's state curriculum.
 - Educators will not be allowed to tell students their preferred pronouns or ask students their preferred pronouns.
 - Anyone in the school district will be able to object to and request the removal of any book or learning materials that describe any sexual conduct.

- Status: Defeated

5. **[HB 999](#): Postsecondary Educational Institutions**

- Would prohibit schools that are a part of the Florida College System from advocating “for diversity, equity, and inclusion, or promote or engage in political or social activism” and would require a review of schools with a mission statement or curriculum that are based on “theories that systemic racism, sexism, oppression, or privilege are inherent in the institutions of the United States and were created to maintain social, political, or economic inequities.”
- Would remove curricula, major, or minors related to addressing injustices (Afro American studies, gender studies) as well as prohibit activity from any programs or organizations on campuses that promote DEI.
- Status: Defeated

6. **[SB 266](#): Higher Education**

- Higher education institutions will be prevented from spending state or federal money to support or maintain programs or campus activities that advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Curriculum based on “theories that systemic racism, sexism, oppression, or privilege are inherent in the institutions of the United States and were created to maintain social, political, or economic inequities” may be reviewed and removed from general education requirements.
- Schools also will not be able to spend money on programs or activities that “promote or engage in political or social activism” as defined by the State Board of Education or the university system’s Board of Governors.
- Two exemptions apply. If an accrediting body requires a course that may promote ideas related to DEI, the course may be funded. Courses related to DEI may not be general education requirements, but a school may allow them to be taken as an elective. An appointed committee will review courses.
- Status: Passed into law

7. **[SB 254](#): Treatments for Sex Reassignment**

- Prohibits sex-reassignment prescriptions and procedures for patients under 18 years old. In certain instances, sex reassignment may be allowed (if treatment began before the SB 254 was enacted). However, to receive care, the patient and physician must provide in-person written consent to carry out treatment. Also allows the state to take “emergency custody” of a child if the parent is suspected of forcing them to seek sex-reassignment treatment.
- Governmental entities, public postsecondary education institutions, state group health insurance programs, or managed care plans providing services under Statewide Medicaid Managed Care may not cover sex-reassignment procedures.
- Further makes health care and treatment unavailable by requiring patients to see a physician rather than a nurse practitioner (NP) or physician’s assistant (PA) who [represent the majority of primary care options](#) as well as increasing wait times with the need to see a health care provider in person.
- Status: Passed into law

8. **[HB 1421](#): Gender Clinical Interventions**

- Would ban patients under 18 years old from receiving gender-affirming care and eliminate public health care coverage for gender-affirming treatment.

- The law would also ban individuals from changing their gender on their birth certificate.
- Status: Defeated

9. [SB 1674](#): Facility Requirements Based on Sex

- Also known as the “Safety in Private Spaces Act,” prohibits individuals from “willfully entering” gender-specific bathrooms and changing rooms designated for “the opposite sex” with the exemption of chaperones of children, custodial workers, police officers, and emergency service workers.
- Status: Defeated

10. [HB 1521](#): Facility Requirements Based on Sex

- Requires public or state-owned buildings maintain exclusive restrooms for male and female occupants and establish procedures for reporting individuals who attempt to use restrooms designated for the opposite sex. Schools must establish disciplinary procedures for students who attempt to use restrooms designated for the opposite sex, and individuals who attempt to use restrooms for the opposite sex may be charged with trespassing.
- Exemptions for chaperones of children, custodial workers, police officers, and emergency service workers.
- Status: Passed into law

While many of these laws primarily affect residents of Florida, they also contribute to the growth of anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric and the potential for open displays of support for LGBTQ+ communities to be met with hostility toward travelers.

Equality Florida, an LGBTQ+ civil rights group, issued a [travel advisory](#) on April 4, 2023. The group cautioned against short-term or long-term travel to the state as well as relocation, citing laws that are “hostile to the LGBTQ community, restrict access to reproductive health care, repeal gun safety laws, foment racial prejudice, and attack public education by banning books and censoring curriculum.”

The NAACP also [issued a statement](#) following the ban of an Advanced Placement African American studies course in high schools warning the state is becoming hostile toward Black communities, and The Florida Immigrant Coalition issued a [travel advisory](#) noting travelers to Florida should take “extreme caution as it can be unsafe for people of color, individuals who speak with an accent, and international travelers.”

Organizations’ and companies’ responses to hosting events in Florida have been mixed.

The Walt Disney Company announced it [will host the Out & Equal Workplace Summit](#) at Walt Disney World in Orlando in September 2023. Out & Equal released a statement to [explain the organization’s decision to host the event in Florida](#), saying “allowing the growing vitriol toward our community to stand unchecked as the ‘new normal’ would be detrimental,” and the organization plans to devote “enormous care and resources—in close coordination with our various event properties, transportation partners, and local authorities—to ensure a secure event.”

However, The Pride Alliance of Treasure Coast [canceled its annual LGBTQ+ parade](#) citing safety concerns for attendees and fear of repercussions under the impending [drag show bans](#). Games Done Quick, a semiannual video game charity marathon, also made the decision to [cancel its event scheduled to take place in Florida](#), citing Florida is “no longer safe for our community.”

Approach Business Travel to Florida with Caution

Factors to Consider for Business Travel to Florida

It is up to the individual discretion of companies to decide whether or not to book business travel to Florida. Use knowledge about the sentiments your employees have toward social issues, available funds, safety logistics, and your company's mission to make an informed decision.

Consider these three factors before booking business travel to Florida amid the growth of anti-LGBTQ+ laws.



Learn More About Top Social Issues Critical for Organizations

In a radically changing and increasingly polarized world, companies face a new dilemma. When major shifts occur, such as the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, should they speak out? Does that imply a political bias that could offend employees, customers, or other stakeholders?

In this [paper](#), Seramount examines who is impacted by corporations speaking out, best practices in determining when and why to speak out, and how Seramount can help your organization understand employees' needs so you can best position your statements.

1. Approach to social issues. How does your organization tackle social issues in the workplace?

Companies take various approaches to social issues, including legal advocacy (lobbying), public statements (supportive communications or mission statements), or workplace benefits (travel for abortion).

Ensure your company's decision regarding business travel to Florida is consistent with existing efforts on social issues. Here are two different approaches to social issues.

- **Direct action.** Direct action can include hosting events, specifically events meant to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion, in Florida to help create safe spaces to discuss political actions, challenges, and solutions to DEI-related issues. This is a direct challenge to the hostile environment being created in Florida for LGBTQ+ people. By hosting the Out & Equal summit in Orlando, The Walt Disney Company is engaging in direct action against anti-LGBTQ+ laws.

Another example of direct action is legal pursuits. Some companies such as Apple Inc. are [using their lobbying power to push back](#) against anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, and other businesses who operate in Florida are [contacting legislators to inform them about how these laws will negatively impact](#) their businesses and DEI efforts.

- **Passive action.** An example of passive action is refusing to support Florida's economy by relocating events or conferences to another state. Florida's [tourism industry was estimated to bring in around \\$97 billion](#) in 2019. By moving events, companies can show they do not support the growth of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation by funneling money into other state economies.

While organizations such as Pivot [moved events scheduled to take place in Florida](#), The Walt Disney Company also made an economic impact [by pausing all political donations to Florida politicians](#) (estimated at \$4.8 billion).

Another example of passive action may be issuing statements or signing pledges such as the Human Rights Campaign's [National Business Statement Opposing Anti-LGBTQ State Legislation](#) to show public support for the LGBTQ+ community. Companies may also create communications or campaigns to voice their support as well. In 2022, Ben and Jerry's created a national [billboard campaign to show support for transgender youth](#).

Organizations may choose to take a combination of direct and passive actions that align with their mission and resources.

2. Employee sentiment. Are employees adverse to business travel to Florida?

Consider surveying employees to gauge how many employees are willing to travel to Florida. Companies or industries with a high percentage of employees who identify as LGBTQ+ (the tech industry has a [high concentration of transgender employees](#)) may be more cautious about booking business travel to Florida.

It may also be beneficial to allow employees to opt out of events if they do not feel safe traveling to Florida. A survey by the Global Business Travel Association found 63% of employers allow their employees to [opt out of any trip they are uncomfortable taking](#), and 31% of employers say opt-out requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Creating this option for employees can allow individuals to determine their own level of risk and use their personal values to make decisions best suited for them.

3. Event logistics. Is your organization able to ensure the safety and well-being of all employees when traveling to Florida?

While large companies such as Walt Disney may be able to provide extra security for LGBTQ+ employees and allies to ensure there are safe spaces when traveling to Florida, other companies may not be able to do so.

In the event your company does book business travel to Florida, your team should take extra precautions to ensure LGBTQ+ employees and allies feel safe and protected. Travel Guard lists thorough [planning as the most effective important factor](#) for making LGBTQ+ employees feel safe and comfortable.

Know what laws could affect travelers and how event staff can respond to ensure the safety and well-being of your employees. For example, laws regarding restroom facility requirements may be especially relevant, depending on the venue where events are hosted. If your company books business travel to Florida, safety should be a top priority.