

Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

Resolution 12: Protecting LGBTQ+ Students

Abstract: A resolution urging Cornell University to implement and uphold comprehensive protections for LGBTQ+ members of the Cornell community in response to recent actions undermining LGBTQ+ rights. Calling for expanded legal, medical, and institutional support, sustained funding for LGBTQ+ programs, and strengthened privacy protections. Emphasizing the University's core values of diversity and inclusion, the resolution seeks to ensure the safety, equity, and well-being of LGBTQ+ Cornellians.

Sponsored by: Zander Lynch, GPSA EVP Operations; Sowad Ocean Karim, GPSA President; Qgrads; SIPS Community Advocacy

Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 04/13/2025

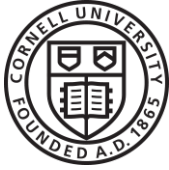
Whereas, in the weeks following the 2025 United States Presidential inauguration, several Executive Orders have been issued that adversely affect the rights and well-being of transgender and other LGBTQ+ individuals within the Cornell community. Notably:

[Executive Order 14173](#), titled "*Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity*", mandates the termination of federal programs perceived as providing "illegal preferences," effectively dismantling numerous diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives that support LGBTQ+ individuals.

[Executive Order 14174](#), titled "*Defending Women From Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government*", redefines sex as strictly binary—male and female—thereby eliminating federal recognition of gender identity.

These orders rescind prior protections, including [Executive Orders 13988](#) and [14075](#), which safeguarded against discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation. These actions have led to the removal of transgender-related content from federal websites and the rollback of nondiscrimination protections in healthcare, education, and employment, posing significant risks to the safety, health, and rights of LGBTQ+ individuals.

Whereas, [Cornell's ten stated core values](#) include the following: "Embrace difference and diversity," "Promote cross-cultural and cross-national understanding," "Be a collaborative, collegial and caring community," "Be accessible and affordable to all who meet high academic standards.";



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36 **Whereas**, the recent decision to cut funding from the University of Pennsylvania, primarily
37 motivated by the inclusion of a single transgender swimmer who competed in accordance with
38 NCAA regulations at the time, sets a dangerous precedent for further discrimination against
39 transgender athletes and individuals. This action is both part of a broader trend that seeks to
40 undermine the rights of transgender individuals and reinforces harmful stereotypes and practices
41 that marginalize transgender people in sports and beyond.

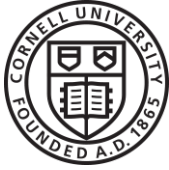
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43 **Whereas**, recent federal actions, including the aforementioned executive orders, have resulted in
44 increased restrictions and denials of accurate gender markers on official documents such as
45 passports, as evidenced by [updates to the U.S. State Department's guidelines on sex markers](#).
46 These changes pose significant threats to the safety, mobility, and autonomy of transgender
47 Cornellians, particularly when traveling domestically or internationally.

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49 **Whereas**, Cornell University's Administration sent a campus-wide [email on January 28, 2025](#),
50 with an additional [email on February 21, 2025](#), stressing the University's commitment to
51 continuing its support of all members of the Cornell community;

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53 **Whereas**, at [a March 2025 LGBTQ+ Student Town Hall](#), University administrators reiterated
54 their commitment to supporting LGBTQ+ students, yet the event also highlighted ongoing
55 concerns from students regarding visibility, institutional accountability, and the need for
56 expanded resources and protections;

57
58 **Whereas**, LGBTQ+ students at Cornell University face unique challenges in navigating social,
59 academic, and environmental situations, often encountering discrimination, microaggressions,
60 and barriers to physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

61
62 **Whereas**, there are a variety of LGBTQ+ organizations on campus, including [Haven: The](#)
63 [LGBTQ Student Union](#), [Trans, Agender, Nonbinary, Genderfluid, and Other \(TANGO\)](#),
64 [Biodiversify Affiliates at Cornell](#), [LGBT Resource Center](#), [QGrads](#), [OutLaw](#), [Out for Business](#),
65 [Pride School of Veterinary Medicine Cornell \(Pride SVMC\)](#), [Cornell University LGBTQ](#)
66 [Colleague Network Group \(LGBTQ+ CNG\)](#), [Cornell University Gay and Lesbian Alumni](#)
67 [Association \(CUGALA\)](#), that play a critical role in providing support, community, and advocacy
68 for LGBTQ+ students;



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70 **Whereas**, LGBTQ+ students, especially those who are transgender, non-binary, and those who
71 experience intersectional discrimination (including but not limited to LGBTQ+ students of color,
72 LGBTQ+ international students, and LGBTQ+ students with disabilities), are disproportionately
73 impacted by the national political climate, making them vulnerable to increased hostility,
74 marginalization, and targeting.

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76 **Whereas**, research consistently shows that LGBTQ+ students benefit from having access to
77 affirming spaces, resources, and services, including mental health support, advocacy, safe
78 spaces, and LGBTQ+ inclusive policies within academic and campus settings.

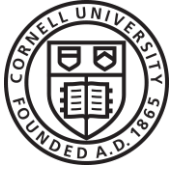
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80 **Whereas**, within Cornell at the level of the student assembly, there has been a precedent of bias
81 towards organizations like Haven, GJAC as reported in, [*“Investigatory Report on Allegations*](#)
82 [*Against Vice President of Finance Rocco DeLorenzo, Vice President of Internal Operations*](#)
83 [*Clyde Lederman, President Patrick Kuehl, and Executive Vice President Claire Ting*”](#);

84
85 **Whereas**, research on LGBTQ+ issues is at risk, and the [list of words flagged in federal grants](#)
86 includes “LGBTQ”, “transgender”, “gay”, and “nonbinary”, among many other relevant
87 keywords. Additionally, the community is faced with credible concerns that LGBTQ+
88 researchers are themselves being actively defunded due to identity-based discrimination. These
89 incidents highlight the increasing challenges faced by LGBTQ+ Cornellians and those
90 advocating with and for them.

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92 **Be It Therefore Resolved**, Cornell University must actively fully protect marginalized members
93 within the Cornell community, including LGBTQ+ and gender non-conforming members of our
94 community.

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96 **Be It Further Resolved**, Cornell University must affirm and actively support its commitment to
97 [LGBT Studies](#) and the scholars advancing this field. The University should provide stable, long-
98 term funding for LGBTQ+ research, teaching, and community engagement by supporting faculty
99 appointments, interdisciplinary initiatives, and student research opportunities. This includes
100 sustaining and expanding institutional support for the [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies](#)
101 [Program](#), ensuring equitable access to resources, and recognizing the critical contributions of
102 LGBTQ+ scholarship to the University’s academic mission.

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104 **Be It Further Resolved**, Cornell University must ensure equitable hiring practices by including
105 LGBTQ+ representation on hiring committees, supporting junior LGBTQ+ faculty through



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mentorship programs, and making transparent the metrics used to evaluate diversity in departmental hiring.

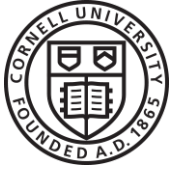
Be It Further Resolved, Cornell University must develop a comprehensive communication plan to regularly publicize and update information about LGBTQ+ resources, including gender-affirming care, legal services, and community spaces, ensuring that all students are aware of their rights and support systems.

Be It Further Resolved, In the case where any member of the Cornell community (students, staff, faculty, etc.) is targeted for aspects of their identity, Cornell University will commit to providing free legal assistance to community members.

Be It Further Resolved, Cornell University must expand access to free legal services through new and existing initiatives, including but not limited to: the University should fund a full-time Clinical Teaching Fellow and/or a staff attorney with specialized expertise in LGBTQ+ legal advocacy at Cornell Law School to support the Cornell LGBTQ+ community and their immediate needs. This support must include, but not be limited to, assistance with legal name and gender marker changes, navigating discrimination in housing, employment, and healthcare, and addressing challenges related to immigration or asylum for LGBTQ+ individuals. The University should monitor the expanded capacity to assess whether the Clinical Fellow and/or staff attorney is meeting the legal representation needs of the most vulnerable LGBTQ+ students at Cornell. The University should be responsible for appropriately disseminating information so that members of the community are aware of the resources available. Although existing legal resources have provided valuable services, without a dedicated structure focused on LGBTQ+ legal concerns, current offerings remain insufficient to meet the volume and specificity of support the Cornell community needs and deserves.

Be It Further Resolved, that Cornell University implements a dedicated Student Legal Services (SLS) office modeled after that of peer institutions such as the [University of Minnesota](#), [University of Massachusetts Amherst](#), etc.

Be It Further Resolved, Cornell University must ensure that international LGBTQ+ students have access to legal, immigration, and housing support, including the hiring of legal staff trained in LGBTQ+-specific immigration concerns, and must advocate for their safety during academic and legal proceedings.



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Be It Further Resolved, Cornell University must safeguard, expand access to, and make aware to pertinent organizations including those listed within the body of this resolution the University's resources on gender-affirming medical care, including hormone therapy, counseling, and surgical referrals, especially for students at risk of losing access due to external political or legal changes.

Be It Further Resolved, Cornell University must reaffirm its commitment to protect student records and uphold the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Be It Further Resolved, Cornell University must designate all LGBTQ+ spaces, including but not limited to Thurston, as spaces exempt from activity by external law enforcement officials.

Be It Further Resolved, Cornell University must formally establish sanctuary protections for LGBTQ+ students by ensuring no student is required to disclose gender identity to law enforcement or external agencies and by supporting students facing passport or legal identification issues due to their gender identity.

Be It Further Resolved, Cornell University must ensure the continued funding of and existence of programs through offices such as the [Gender Equity Resource Center](#), the [Office of Spirituality and Meaning-Making](#), the [Office of Academic Diversity Initiatives](#), [LGBT Resource Center](#), [Loving House](#), [QGrads](#), [Haven: The LGBTQ Student Union](#), the [Graduate & Professional Student Diversity Council \(GPS DC\)](#), and others that provide resources designated for students who have LGBTQ+ identities.

Be It Further Resolved, In the case that an LGBTQ+ student breaks the Student Code of Conduct in the process of demonstrating or advocating under their First Amendment rights, Cornell University ensure that no student's punishment will or possibly will invoke cancellation of their health insurance through Cornell. This means the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards should refrain from the harshest punishments, such as full academic suspensions or temporary suspensions that extend past three weeks, as these sanctions lead to de-enrollment and, thus, the revocation of their health insurance.

Be It Further Resolved, In the case of LGBTQ+ faculty and staff who demonstrate or advocate under their First Amendment rights, Cornell University pledges to provide legal counsel when requested in the case of legal persecution and must refrain from all retaliation, including termination of employment or threats of termination of employment.



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179 **Be It Further Resolved**, Cornell University must increase LGBTQ+ representation within
180 administrative and decision-making bodies by consulting LGBTQ+ student and staff
181 organizations in all policy decisions affecting queer Cornellians.

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183 **Be it Finally Resolved**, Cornell University reaffirms its commitments to LGBTQ+ members of
184 the Cornell community.

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186 Respectfully submitted,

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188 *Zander Lynch, GPSA VP Operations*

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190 *Sowad Ocean Karim, GPSA President*

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192 *QGrads, Graduate and Professional Student Organization*

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194 *SIPS Community Advocacy*