UCLA School of Law Williams Institute

RESEARCH THAT MATTERS

2026 IMPACT REPORT

The Williams Institute is dedicated to conducting rigorous, independent research on issues affecting the lives of LGBTQ people. But our work doesn't stop there. We ensure our findings reach policymakers, judges, service providers, and the public so that decisions concerning the lives of LGBTQ people and families are grounded in facts, not stereotypes. Take a look at some of the impact our research has had over the past 12 months.

1 Data Collection

In January 2026, 25 members of Congress sent a letter to the Government Accountability Office requesting an investigation into federal agencies' actions to end data collection on sexual orientation and gender identity. The removal stemmed from a January 2025 executive order no longer recognizing transgender, nonbinary, and intersex people. The letter cited Williams Institute estimates of LGBT adults and youth, including transgender people, to document the scale of populations whose data would be lost.



SOGI measures have been removed from

360+ data collections

since January 2025.

2 Transgender People

In January 2026, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in two cases involving state restrictions on transgender students' participation in sports: *Little v. Hecox* and *West Virginia v. B.P.J.* During oral argument, Justice Sotomayor questioned whether the size of a marginalized group determines its constitutional protections, citing the Williams Institute's estimate that there are 2.8 million transgender people in the U.S. "That's an awfully big figure," she said.



The United States is home to

2.8 million transgender people

3

Democratic Backsliding

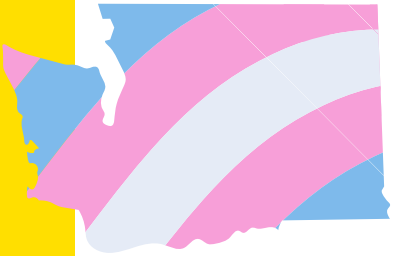
In September 2025, 61 members of Congress wrote to Secretary of State Marco Rubio opposing the State Department's removal of information on LGBTQI+ violence and other abuses from its annual country-level Human Rights Reports. The letter cited Williams Institute research showing that criminalization of LGBTQI+ people often signals a country's broader rollback of civil liberties and democratic backsliding.



4

International Transgender Day of Visibility

In February 2026, the Board of Health in Thurston County, Washington, passed a resolution designating March 31 as International Transgender Day of Visibility in the county. The declaration cited Williams Institute data that found Washington has one of the most gender-diverse populations in the U.S.



In the state of Washington,

66,300 people

identify as transgender.

5

Transgender Troops

An early version of the 2026 National Defense Authorization Act included an amendment prohibiting transgender military personnel from using restrooms, locker rooms, and changing rooms that align with their gender identity. During a September 2025 debate on the bill, U.S. Representative Sara Jacobs cited Williams Institute research showing that there is no evidence that allowing transgender people to use these facilities impacts safety.

