# Texas Senate bill threatens to ban LGBTQ+ school clubs, sparking fears among students



In a quiet classroom at Sherman High School, 16-year-old Willow Biasi fondly recalls the gatherings of the Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA). The club, a lifeline for many students navigating their identities, provided a space where members could enjoy simple pleasures—sharing homemade cupcakes and discussing politics—far removed from the sort of detrimental activities some lawmakers now associate with such groups. However, that safe haven faces potential extinction as Texas legislators push through Senate Bill 12, which aims to ban all public school clubs based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Rep. Jeff Leach, a Republican from Allen, encapsulated the sentiments expressed by proponents of the legislation, declaring, "We do not need to have school-sponsored and school-sanctioned sex clubs, period." This dramatic framing, however, contrasts sharply with the reality described by students and families involved in GSAs. Reflecting on the club's purpose, Willow noted, “It was mostly just supposed to be a safe, welcoming, calm space." Her family has grown deeply invested in the group's mission, even as they anticipate a troubling future for such spaces under the new law.

Senate Bill 12 not only prohibits the formation of LGBTQ+ clubs in schools but also restricts schools from providing any instruction or support related to sexual orientation and gender identity. Dallas Independent School District spokesperson Nina Lakhiani indicated that the district is still exploring the implications of the bill, acknowledging uncertainty around how many clubs may be affected. This legislative move fits within a broader trend in Texas, where some school boards have already begun to restrict books featuring LGBTQ+ characters and dictate use of bathrooms by transgender students. The Sherman district was recently embroiled in controversy when it attempted to remove a transgender student from a leading role in the school musical, sparking national scrutiny.

For Willow's family, the looming changes are more than a political issue; they signify the possible loss of a cherished space. "These kids really need somewhere to go," said Jamie Biasi, Willow’s mother. She expressed concern that off-campus meetings could complicate participation for those still in the closet. The chilling effects of such legislative restrictions are palpable, particularly among students who have witnessed their identities under attack in both state and national discourse. Willow articulated a collective anxiety post-election, recalling discussions with peers about their future as supportive clubs might dissipate.

Efforts to persuade lawmakers to reconsider the bill met with resistance. In a heated debate within the Texas Capitol, Rep. Rafael Anchía, a Democrat from Dallas, challenged Leach’s terminology equating GSAs with "sex clubs," emphasising the innocent, community-building activities inherent in such groups. Nonetheless, Leach maintained his stance, suggesting existing clubs could provide a suitable substitute for LGBTQ+ organisations. “My sincere hope would be that there are other clubs and organizations in the school where those students would feel welcomed and at home,” he stated during deliberations.

Critics, including parents like Willow's, argue that this legislation overreaches by restricting parental rights and student autonomy in exploring their identities. They question the rationale behind limiting students' access to supportive spaces, noting that exploration of identity is crucial during formative years. In response, Rep. Erin Zwiener articulated her frustrations, highlighting how the bill disenfranchises parents who want their children to connect with peers in a supportive environment.

Student leaders, cognisant of the fact that not every LGBTQ+ student may attend meetings, underscore the importance of their club's visibility. Jarred Burton, a recent graduate from Katy ISD, remarked on the empowering presence of inclusive symbols, like pride flags, within schools. He described how such representations contribute to a safe environment, where students can engage in meaningful dialogue and express their concerns openly.

As the legislative landscape shifts, students like Willow grapple with a profound sense of uncertainty about their futures in Texas. With a pressing desire to graduate early, she ponders leaving a state where political tides seem increasingly hostile to her identity and those of her peers. In this moment of turmoil, one foundational truth remains: the need for safe spaces and community support among LGBTQ+ youth has never been more critical.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dallasnews.com/news/education/2025/06/09/texas-teens-worry-as-lawmakers-ban-lgbtq-clubs-in-public-schools/), [[2]](https://www.dallasnews.com/news/education/2025/06/09/texas-teens-worry-as-lawmakers-ban-lgbtq-clubs-in-public-schools/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dallasnews.com/news/education/2025/06/09/texas-teens-worry-as-lawmakers-ban-lgbtq-clubs-in-public-schools/), [[2]](https://www.dallasnews.com/news/education/2025/06/09/texas-teens-worry-as-lawmakers-ban-lgbtq-clubs-in-public-schools/), [[5]](https://www.click2houston.com/news/texas/2025/02/24/republican-lawmaker-files-bills-to-ban-dei-in-texas-k-12-public-schools/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.texastribune.org/2025/02/24/texas-dei-public-schools-k12/), [[6]](https://www.dallasnews.com/news/politics/2025/04/15/bill-banning-lgbtq-other-advocacy-flags-in-public-schools-clears-texas-senate/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dallasnews.com/news/education/2025/06/09/texas-teens-worry-as-lawmakers-ban-lgbtq-clubs-in-public-schools/), [[5]](https://www.click2houston.com/news/texas/2025/02/24/republican-lawmaker-files-bills-to-ban-dei-in-texas-k-12-public-schools/), [[7]](https://www.krgv.com/news/texas-students-say-k-12-dei-ban-and-other-anti-lgbtq-bills-threaten-their-safety-voice-and-mental-health)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dallasnews.com/news/education/2025/06/09/texas-teens-worry-as-lawmakers-ban-lgbtq-clubs-in-public-schools/), [[3]](https://www.texastribune.org/2025/02/24/texas-dei-public-schools-k12/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[2]](https://www.dallasnews.com/news/education/2025/06/09/texas-teens-worry-as-lawmakers-ban-lgbtq-clubs-in-public-schools/), [[4]](https://www.kut.org/politics/2025/03/20/texas-senate-approves-bill-banning-dei-in-k-12-public-schools)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dallasnews.com/news/education/2025/06/09/texas-teens-worry-as-lawmakers-ban-lgbtq-clubs-in-public-schools/), [[6]](https://www.dallasnews.com/news/politics/2025/04/15/bill-banning-lgbtq-other-advocacy-flags-in-public-schools-clears-texas-senate/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/education/2025/06/09/texas-teens-worry-as-lawmakers-ban-lgbtq-clubs-in-public-schools/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/education/2025/06/09/texas-teens-worry-as-lawmakers-ban-lgbtq-clubs-in-public-schools/> - This article discusses the concerns of Texas teenagers regarding Senate Bill 12, which prohibits public schools from sponsoring student clubs based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The bill also bans schools from providing instruction or programming on these topics. The piece highlights the experiences of students like Willow Biasi, who valued the safe space provided by their school's Gender and Sexuality Alliance. The article also touches upon the broader implications of the legislation on LGBTQ+ students and the potential challenges schools may face in implementing the new law.
3. <https://www.texastribune.org/2025/02/24/texas-dei-public-schools-k12/> - This article reports on the Texas Senate Education Committee's approval of Senate Bill 12, which seeks to extend the state's ban on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives to K-12 public schools. The bill, introduced by Senator Brandon Creighton, would make it illegal for school districts to consider DEI in hiring and employment decisions, prevent schools from developing policies or programs that reference race, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation, and ban classroom instruction on these topics. The legislation reflects a broader conservative push to limit DEI efforts in education.
4. <https://www.kut.org/politics/2025/03/20/texas-senate-approves-bill-banning-dei-in-k-12-public-schools> - This article covers the Texas Senate's approval of Senate Bill 12, which bans diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives in K-12 public schools. The bill prohibits schools from considering DEI in hiring decisions, developing policies or programs that reference race, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation, and bans classroom instruction on these topics. The legislation has sparked debate, with opponents arguing that it could harm minority students and hinder the recruitment of diverse educators.
5. <https://www.click2houston.com/news/texas/2025/02/24/republican-lawmaker-files-bills-to-ban-dei-in-texas-k-12-public-schools/> - This article discusses the introduction of Senate Bill 12 by Senator Brandon Creighton, which aims to ban diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives in K-12 public schools. The bill would make it illegal for school districts to consider DEI in hiring and employment decisions, prevent schools from developing policies or programs that reference race, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation, and ban classroom instruction on these topics. The legislation reflects a broader conservative push to limit DEI efforts in education.
6. <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/politics/2025/04/15/bill-banning-lgbtq-other-advocacy-flags-in-public-schools-clears-texas-senate/> - This article reports on the Texas Senate's passage of a bill that bans public schools from displaying unapproved flags, including those representing LGBTQ+ pride. The legislation allows schools to display only a dozen specific flags, such as those of the United States, Texas, and the armed forces. Schools that violate the bill and fail to report a remedy within a certain timeframe would be subject to a $500 daily fine. The bill now moves to the Texas House for further consideration.
7. <https://www.krgv.com/news/texas-students-say-k-12-dei-ban-and-other-anti-lgbtq-bills-threaten-their-safety-voice-and-mental-health> - This article highlights concerns among Texas students regarding Senate Bill 12, which bans diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives in K-12 public schools, and other anti-LGBTQ+ legislation. Students and advocates worry that the bills threaten their safety, voice, and mental health, and could lead to the removal of supportive teachers and safe spaces for LGBTQ+ students. The article underscores the broader implications of the legislation on student well-being and the educational environment.