



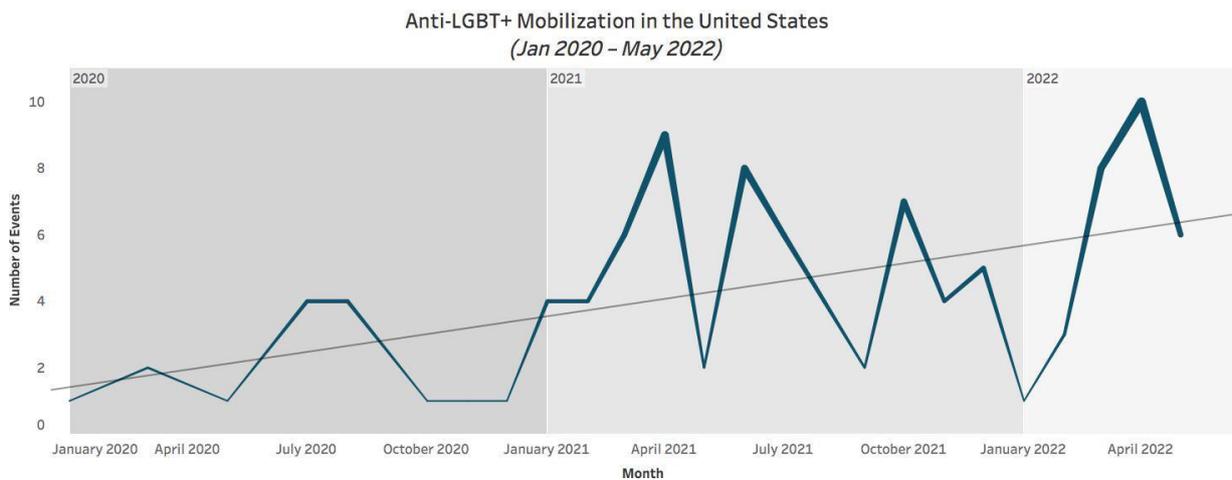
Fact Sheet: Anti-LGBT+ Mobilization on the Rise in the United States

KEY TRENDS

- Anti-LGBT+ mobilization — including demonstrations, political violence, and offline propaganda activity like flyering — increased by over four times from 2020 to 2021
 - ACLED data indicate that 2022 is on track to be worse than 2021
- Incidents of political violence targeting the LGBT+ community this year have already exceeded the total number of attacks reported last year
- Nine times as many anti-LGBT+ demonstrations were reported in 2021 relative to 2020
 - At least 15% of these demonstrations turned violent or destructive last year
- Far-right militias and militant social movements increased their engagement in anti-LGBT+ demonstrations sevenfold last year, from two events in 2020 to 14 in 2021
 - Their engagement in anti-LGBT+ events in 2022 is on track to either match or outpace their activity in 2021

OVERVIEW

Amid a wave of legislation¹ targeting the LGBT+ community, anti-LGBT+ mobilization is increasing in the United States (see graph below). Anti-LGBT+ mobilization captured by ACLED — including demonstrations (both peaceful and violent), acts of political violence (including sexual violence, non-sexual attacks, and mob violence), and the dissemination of offline propaganda (like flyering) — rose fourfold from 15 events in 2020 to 61 in 2021. As of early June 2022² and the start of LGBT+ Pride Month, ACLED has already recorded 33 anti-LGBT+ events this year — putting 2022 on track to be a worse year for anti-LGBT+ mobilization than 2021.



POLITICAL VIOLENCE TARGETING THE LGBT+ COMMUNITY IS INCREASING

Members of the LGBT+ community face higher risks of interpersonal violence ([Human Rights Campaign, 25 June 2020](#)), and are nearly four times more likely to be victims of violent crime ([UCLA Williams Institute, 2 October 2020](#)). ACLED data indicate that the LGBT+ community is also at heightened risk of *political* violence, defined as serious physical manifestations of violence that are reported to be politically rather than interpersonally motivated.³ This subset includes attacks by spontaneous, violent mobs; law enforcement; and/or extremist individuals or groups.⁴

1. According to Human Rights Campaign, “more than 300 anti-LGBTQ+ bills [have been] introduced in states across the country” in 2022 ([Human Rights Campaign, 8 March 2022](#)).

2. Data analyzed in this fact sheet are updated as of 10 June 2022; access the latest data, updated weekly, through the [ACLEDDATA.COM website](#).

3. The ACLED dataset is not a crime dataset. While some hate crimes may be included in the dataset, not all hate crimes will meet ACLED’s threshold for serious acts of physical, political violence. Other datasets with different methodologies may arrive at different figures. Please see the ACLED [Codebook](#) and [Resource Library](#) for more information.

4. As indicated above, it is important to note that political violence only represents a small subset of the many types of violence faced by the LGBT+ community.

As right-wing politicians and media outlets have mainstreamed the use of increasingly inflammatory rhetoric against the LGBT+ community in the United States ([New York Magazine, 8 April 2022](#); [Vox, 21 April 2022](#)), anti-LGBT+ political violence has ramped up: incidents of political violence targeting the LGBT+ community this year have already exceeded the total number of attacks reported last year, with 10 events as of 10 June 2022, relative to nine in 2021. Extremist individuals are responsible for most of these attacks, though violent mobs have also played a role. In fact, since the beginning of ACLED coverage in 2020, the LGBT+ community has been one of the most frequent targets of mob violence in the United States: of 56 reported events since the start of 2020 in which violent mobs attacked civilians, members of the LGBT+ community were targeted in at least 11.

ANTI-LGBT+ DEMONSTRATIONS ARE BECOMING MORE VIOLENT

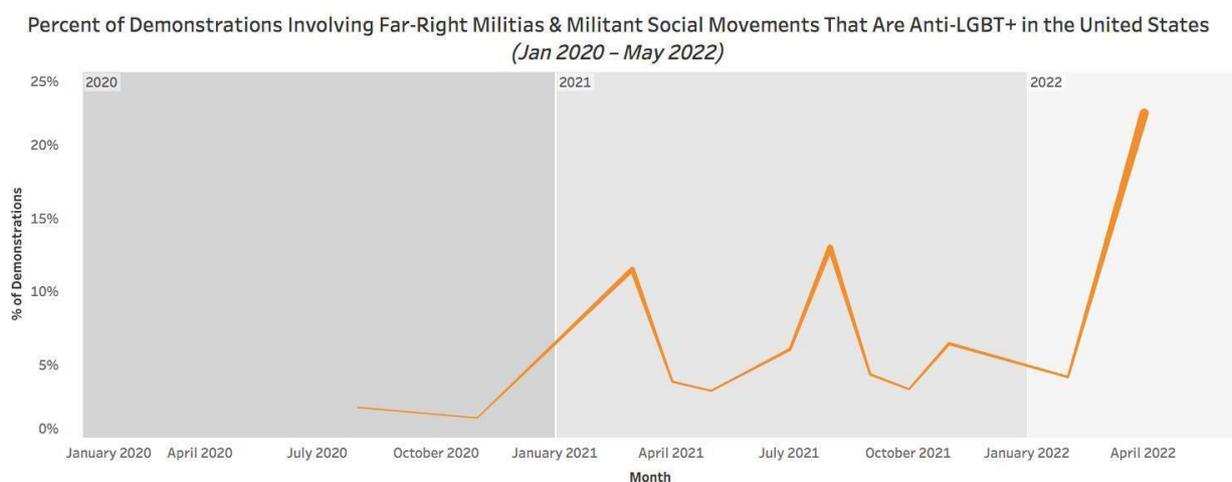
Demonstration activity accounts for the majority — 89% — of anti-LGBT+ mobilization last year, with nine times as many anti-LGBT+ demonstrations reported in 2021 (54 events) compared to 2020 (six events). As anti-LGBT+ rhetoric began intensifying on the right last year, these encounters became more contentious, raising the risk of protest violence. At least 15% of anti-LGBT+ demonstrations turned violent and/or destructive in 2021 (eight events in total), marking a significant increase from 2020 when ACLED did not record any anti-LGBT+ protests that turned violent or destructive.

So far this year, at least 22 anti-LGBT+ demonstrations have been reported. Most of these demonstrations have taken place in Florida (five events), California (four events), Mississippi (two events), and Georgia (two events).⁵ This does not include events that were canceled or delayed and not yet held as a result of threats of violence from anti-LGBT+ extremists ([TIME, 16 June 2022](#)).⁶

In 2022, however, anti-LGBT+ mobilization is increasingly shifting away from demonstration activity toward outright political violence. As of 10 June, violent attacks account for over a quarter — 27% — of anti-LGBT+ mobilization this year, up from 11% last year.

FAR-RIGHT GROUPS ARE TAKING A LARGER ROLE IN ANTI-LGBT+ MOBILIZATION

While coordinated organizing against the LGBT+ community has not been a primary driver of far-right militia and militant social movement (MSM) activity in recent years, this pattern is changing (*see graph below*). Far-right militias and MSMs — like the Proud Boys — increased their engagement in anti-LGBT+ demonstrations sevenfold last year, from two events in 2020 to 14 in 2021. This is a dangerous trend: right-wing demonstrations⁷ are [12 times more likely](#) to turn violent and/or destructive when far-right militias or MSMs are involved. As of 10 June, these groups were involved in at least six anti-LGBT+ demonstrations in 2022, indicating that their engagement in anti-LGBT+ mobilization is on track to either match or outpace their activity in 2021.



These trends have most recently culminated in incidents like Patriot Front’s thwarted “conspiracy to riot” at an LGBT+ Pride event in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho on 11 June 2022 ([CNN, 13 June 2022](#)). Groups like Patriot Front [significantly increased](#) their preparatory actions last year: the number of Patriot Front training exercises (e.g. close-quarters combat or sparring trainings) rose fivefold in 2021 and expanded to twice as many

5. Since 2020, most anti-LGBT+ demonstrations have taken place in California (15 events), Florida (11 events), Oregon, Texas (each 8 events), Virginia, Pennsylvania (each four events), Idaho, Illinois, Georgia, and Washington, DC (each three events).

6. According to TIME and Media Matters, “at least 11 different LGBTQ Pride events...have been disrupted by right-wing protesters or delayed due to threats of violence in the past two months” ([TIME, 16 June 2022](#)). Such events that involved protests are coded as [demonstrations](#) in the ACLED dataset; other types of events that were disrupted or delayed may be coded as [strategic developments](#). Note that events reported after 10 June 2022 that meet our inclusion criteria will be included in future updates to the dataset.

7. This fact sheet uses the definition of right-wing demonstrations from ACLED’s report: [Far-Right Violence and the American Midterm Elections](#).

states relative to the year prior. As of 10 June, Patriot Front has already held at least 17 training exercises this year.⁸

Similar to the cross-pollination opportunities presented by activism against issues like abortion access and critical race theory, anti-LGBT+ mobilization will likely offer a conducive environment for far-right militias and MSMs to build networks not only with the wider right-wing activist community but also amongst each other. For example, on 4 June 2022, a far-right demonstration against a drag show in Dallas, Texas, brought together a wide range of different groups as well as unaffiliated individuals, including self-proclaimed 'Christian Fascists,' adherents to the QAnon conspiracy movement, and affiliates of the American Populist Union, the New Columbia Movement, and Groypers ([New Republic, 8 June 2022](#); [Pink News, 8 June 2022](#)). Similar events have been reported since, such as a Drag Queen Story Hour at a library in Oakland, California on 11 June 2022 that was met with opposition by members of the Proud Boys ([LA Times, 14 June 2022](#)). These incidents may only continue to escalate through the end of Pride Month and beyond.

A US-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in 2014, [ACLEDD](#) is the highest quality and most widely used real-time data and analysis source on political violence and demonstrations around the world.

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8. These reports are sourced from a Telegram channel run by Patriot Front, purposefully not linked to here. This source is shared by ACLED's partner, MilitiaWatch.