

**From: Transgender Freedom Alliance**

**Re: Preliminary Recommendations from Qualitative Research on Transgender Issues**

**Date: June 20, 2024**

Recent qualitative research on transgender issues conducted by Impact Research in battleground states surfaced these preliminary messaging recommendations:

### **Healthcare for Transgender Young People**

*The number of people who transition [their gender] and then change or stop is very, very small, but it has happened. That's why the expert medical standards were updated two years ago to ensure every patient has a thorough mental health care assessment, to make sure whether transition is the right path for them.*

### **Gender Identification**

*As we all know, the vast majority of people identify as either male or female, and always have. For a few people, their situation is more complicated. I'm not a scientist, but I do know that for that small number of people, their experience of gender is different. The important thing is that every American, no matter their gender, is respected and protected the same as every other American.*

### **Forced Outing**

*Of course, every parent wants to be informed and involved in their child's life. Parental involvement is what teachers and schools hope for, too. And most of the time, that's exactly what happens. The thing is, not all teens live in homes where healthy communication is possible, and some transgender teens fear being kicked out of their homes, beaten, or worse. We can't have politicians passing laws that force teachers and schools to risk putting students in danger.*

### **Priorities**

*Now more than ever, Americans are working hard to make ends meet. We need real solutions to real problems, not divisions stirred up by politicians for their own political gain. So while certain politicians are focused on creating a big panic around transgender kids, I'm focused on raising incomes and lowering everyday costs for working families.*

### **Freedom**

*America is about the freedom to make decisions about our lives, our futures, and our families. But certain politicians are taking away our freedoms. They're banning abortion and banning parents from making healthcare decisions about their own children. The politicians behind these attacks on transgender kids don't support freedom—their agenda is control.*

**Contact: TFA Co-Director Adrienne Kimmell, [akimmell@sparksolutions.us](mailto:akimmell@sparksolutions.us)**

**June 18, 2024**

**To: Interested Parties**

**Fr: Molly Murphy, Mayra Cuevas, Aliza Astrow, Lisa Degou; Impact Research**  
**Re: Findings from Qualitative Research on Transgender Youth Issues**

Recent battleground state focus groups and ReMesh on transgender youth issues, conducted on behalf of the Transgender Freedom Alliance, revealed several messages that are particularly strong in responding to conservative attacks on transgender youth. Voters generally believe that the number of young people identifying as transgender or non-binary is increasing in ways that are troubling, and they are also tired of hearing about these issues in news and society. However, they also show empathy for the mental health struggles that transgender young people are experiencing and want them to have access to resources to help them.

Areas with strong potential for positive movement based on our current messages include the concept of gender broadly and requiring teachers to inform a student's parents if that student identifies as transgender or asks to be called different pronouns than their gender at birth – often called forced outing. When it comes to forced outings, participants are quick to empathize with kids, who might feel afraid of coming out to unsupportive or abusive parents, and with teachers, who they understand are placed in an unfair situation by being required to share something so sensitive with parents. On the concept of gender, participants widely agree that everyone should be treated with respect, and couching our message in that value proved compelling.

Although we continue to face challenges on the topics of sports and bathrooms, pivots that focused on “freedom” and “solutions” were well-received by ReMesh participants. Furthermore, participants also show intense concern for young people’s mental health, and they strongly believed that mental health care should remain accessible to transgender youth. Because of this strong concern, there is potential to move voters to oppose bans on healthcare for transgender youth if we can successfully tie conservative policies to bans on mental health care.

The findings and recommendations in this memo are based on three online focus groups and a ReMesh in presidential battleground states among voters who are persuadable on transgender issues. Focus groups were conducted on May 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and the ReMesh was conducted on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

One online focus group was conducted among white women without college degrees, one among white men with college degrees, and one among Black men.

Qualitative findings are only directional and should not be extrapolated onto the entire electorate.

While we will be further exploring and refining messaging themes in quantitative research, below are some initial messaging recommendations based on our focus groups and ReMesh:

*Top Messaging – Focus Groups*

- **Focus group participants really liked the reference to mental health support in a message focused on detransitioning.** The women’s group was not aware that transitioning is a lengthy process and felt more positively knowing that. Participants also appreciated that the standards have recently been updated. However, they did not like that there was no age mentioned, as participants across all groups have concerns about transgender minors accessing healthcare (other than mental health care) before they are 18.

***[DETRANSITION]** The number of people who transition [their gender] and then change or stop is very, very small, but it has happened. That’s why the expert medical standards were updated two years ago to ensure every patient has a thorough mental health care assessment to make sure whether transition is the right path for them.*

- **On the issue of forced outings, there was strong agreement with messaging that emphasizes that these policies could put kids in danger.** The audiogram helped those who were originally supportive of forced outings rethink their support and made them more open to treating forced outings on a case-by-case basis instead of one rule. Although many said they would personally want to know if their own child was going by different pronouns at school, they acknowledged that kids’ safety comes first, and we can’t risk teachers putting students in dangerous situations.

***[FORCED OUTING]** Of course, every parent wants to be informed and involved in their child’s life. Parental involvement is what teachers and schools hope for, too. And most of the time, that’s exactly what happens. The thing is, not all teens live in homes where healthy communication is possible, and some transgender teens fear being kicked out of their homes, beaten, or worse. Tough cases like these are the reason we can’t have politicians passing laws that force teachers and schools to risk putting students in danger.*

- **When it came to messaging on gender, there was some pushback on the statement that “the majority of people are born male or female,” as they feel that *all* people are born either male or female.** This can be fixed with a simple modification, saying instead that most people *identify* as either male or female and always have, but for some people, it is different. However, this message ultimately aligned with participants’ values that all Americans should be treated with respect.

**[NUMBER OF GENDERS]** *As we all know, the vast majority of people are born male or female. For a few people, their situation is more complicated. I'm not a scientist, but I do know that for a small number of people, their experience of gender is different. The important thing is that every American, no matter their gender, is respected and protected the same as every other American.*

*Top Messages – ReMesh*

- **The “Solutions-Panic” was the best-received video, for its quick pivot to economic issues that participants felt are much more important.** ReMesh participants liked the focus on working class families and issues that they feel are affecting them as well as most Americans. There was no pushback on this video, and a strong majority of participants indicated they would be more likely to vote for a candidate that spoke about the issue this way. This message was particularly strong with women in our ReMesh.

**[SOLUTIONS / PANIC]** *Now more than ever, Americans are working hard to make ends meet. We need real solutions to real problems, not divisions stirred up by politicians for their own political gain. So while certain politicians are focused on creating a big panic around transgender kids, I'm focused on raising incomes and lowering everyday costs for working families.*

- **In the “Freedom vs Control” video, participants liked that the “politician” was advocating for freedom to make decisions, seeing it as very American.** However, some found it vague and did not like that there were no specific solutions offered for what they're most concerned by – transgender youth under the age of 18 accessing medical treatment.

**[FREEDOM VS CONTROL]** *America is about the freedom to make decisions about our lives, our futures, and our families. But certain politicians are taking away our freedoms. They're banning abortion and banning parents from making healthcare decisions about their own children. The politicians behind these attacks on transgender kids don't support freedom—their agenda is control.*

*Please direct any questions on this research to Adrienne Kimmell (akimmell@sparksolutions.us) or John Neffinger john.neffinger@gmail.com.*