

LAMBDA LEGAL IS HERE TO HELP:

Inside The Help Desk's Frontline Work in a New Trump Era

“THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A NEED FOR THE HELP DESK”

Since 1996, our lines have been open to take requests from LGBTQ+ people and everyone living with HIV.

Lambda Legal's Help Desk is staffed by attorneys who make sure our community has as much information as possible about their rights. They provide crucial general legal information and resources relating to discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, and HIV status.

Due to the perceived and now realized threat of a hostile, anti-LGBTQ+ presidential administration, the volume of requests for assistance to Lambda Legal's Help Desk has increased dramatically since November 6, 2024. The Help Desk typically receives an average of 350 requests a month, but in January alone, the team fielded over 1,050 requests for assistance on everything from the status of identity documents to accessing gender affirming care for a child. Over 75% of the requests that came into the Help Desk occurred between January 20 and January 31, 2025; the first eleven days of the new presidential administration.

The last time the Help Desk experienced a spike in requests for assistance close to this rate was during the fight for marriage equality, with annual numbers at that time averaging 7,500 requests. Our Help Desk is on track to experience a volume of requests that will far surpass that record.

The dedicated Help Desk team takes time to make sure that requests receive care and informed responses though reaching out to the Help Desk does not establish attorney client privilege, the information shared is invaluable to those it helps.

At the beginning of February, Huong Lam (she/her) the Legal Help Desk Director spoke with Liz Ternes, Lambda Legal's Integrated Marketing Associate, to share more about her work at Lambda Legal and how the Help Desk is preparing for the future during the second Trump administration. Read the interview →

Introduce yourself! What brings you to The Help Desk at Lambda Legal?

“I see the Help Desk as a point of connection between our organization and the community we serve. I have always felt comfortable in spaces where I can have a conversation and connect with folks on an individual level. Couple that with my passion to help improve accessibility of the law to the public, I found the work at the Help Desk as a natural fit for me.”

What is the most meaningful part of working at The Help Desk for you?

“The fact that the Help Desk exists to have a space for our community members to reach out to.”

How do you see the work of the help desk staying the same or changing in the next four years?

“There will always be a need for this space. The changes we routinely see is this constant ebb and flow of the different issues affecting our community members. Seeing the way this year has started out, the need to keep our community informed and empowered will likely be the focus for the next four years. The inauguration of Donald Trump on January 20 has created an extraordinary need for services like the Help Desk.”

What is the biggest issue you are talking about right now at the help desk?

“The impact this administration is having on our community members. The top three areas the requests have focused on are access to identity documents, the ban on military service for transgender people, and workplace discrimination.”

What is one thing that you think people who don't know about The Help Desk should know?

“The Help Desk is a source for information, resources, and tools to empower our community members to learn about their rights and the legal landscape affecting LGBTQ+ communities and people who have questions about HIV related issues by HIV. While the Help Desk does not offer direct legal services, we are a vital source of information for the LGBTQ+ community and everyone living with HIV.”

As anti-LGBTQ+ policies increase on all levels of government it is critical to Lambda Legal that our community remains up to date with information about their rights. The work being done at the Help Desk is the front line- it lets us hear directly from our community about their concerns and needs.



To access The Help Desk head to lambdalegal.org/helpdesk and fill out the contact form – one of our attorneys will be in touch soon with information.

FEARLESS + FIGHTING BACK

Spotlighting Lambda Legal's Work in Georgia

In Georgia, Lambda Legal is getting into some “good trouble, necessary trouble” as the state’s late Representative John Lewis would say.

Barely a month into the 2025 Georgia state legislative session, six anti-LGBTQ+ bills have already been heard. These bills read like a check list of the worst kinds of anti-trans legislation — seeking to do everything from banning medically necessary health care for trans youth, to stopping student athletes from participating in school sports, to removing health care coverage for transgender state employees.

But Lambda Legal is fearless and we’re fighting back. Through the work of the staff in our Southern Regional Office and our Atlanta Leadership Council (“ALC”), we are showing up across Georgia’s capitol city to reject these attacks and organize our community. The ALC, which is made up of community members committed to our work in Georgia and across the Southeast, has hit the ground running since

the first of the year. They participated in a day-long retreat to ground their work in 2025, attended the Southern Unity Movement’s 2025 Bayard Rustin / Audre Lorde Breakfast on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and joined LGBTQ+ people from across the State of Georgia at the capitol to protest for the rights of transgender Georgians.

On Monday, January 13, Lambda Legal joined sibling organizations including PFLAG, the ACLU of Georgia, Georgia Equality, HRC, SPLC, and others under our coalition banner of “Georgia Unites,” to organize the Show Up for Trans Georgians Rally on the first day of the legislative session. At the rally, hundreds of LGBTQ+ people and our allies made our voices heard, proclaiming loudly that we will not quietly accept laws that relegate trans people from public life. Following the rally, Carl Charles, Lambda Legal Sr. Attorney, spoke under the Gold Dome of the Georgia State Capital building to both elevate the cruelty of the anti-trans legislation and the importance of uniting to protect the community. The rally, like the other work being done by Lambda Legal in





Georgia and across the country, showed that when our community unites, there is always hope.

“Across the nation 115 bills targeting trans people have been filed in 25 states. That sounds bleak, but it should give us strength in that we are not alone in the fight against people who want trans Georgians and trans people in the United States to be pushed to the side – to be marginalized. We are here to say, not on our watch”

- (Carl Charles [he/him] Lambda Legal Senior Attorney at the Show Up for Trans Georgians” Rally)

In Georgia and beyond, Lambda Legal knows that we are stronger when we are united in the fight for our rights. In the South, when we show up, we bring hope and power, and we win. The work being done by the ALC is a model that can be carried across the country to make real change in the face of attacks on the LGBTQ+ community. Lambda Legal’s work in Georgia reflects our commitment to LGBTQ+ people and everyone living with HIV nationwide. We have faced these challenges before, and we know how to win.

EXECUTIVE ORDERS:

For more than fifty years, Lambda Legal has served as the last line of defense for LGBTQ+ people and people living with HIV.

Within the first two months of the new Presidential administration, we have seen the start of an agenda that emboldens hate and discrimination against our communities and seeks to roll back our hard-won civil rights. The numerous executive orders put forth are efforts to resurrect many attacks from the first Trump administration – attacks that we were able to largely and successfully confront and block.

The Trump administration is targeting, among others, transgender, nonbinary, and intersex people, especially youth, by seeking to deny them access to essential public facilities, school programs, accurate identity documents, and essential and evidence-based medically necessary



Lambda Legal Senior Counsel and Director of Constitutional Law Practice Karen Loewy and Senior Counsel Omar Gonzalez-Pagan.

health care involving the same treatments that are readily available to their cisgender peers. The executive orders also target equity-conscious programming, services, and workplace protections by federal funding recipients, ranging from healthcare providers to housing services.

We have been closely examining the executive orders, filed legal challenges, and are actively considering additional action to challenge these policies in court. In our first lawsuit against the new Trump administration, we have challenged two executive orders which seek to coerce hospitals and other medical providers to stop providing care to people under 19 years of age by making discrimination a condition of federal funding. This policy by the Trump administration is morally reprehensible and clearly unlawful. As such, we filed a lawsuit challenging these blatantly unconstitutional orders that violate the rights of transgender young people and their families. We fought previous attempts by the first Trump administration to restrict health care and we won. We have already secured a national temporary restraining order on this executive order from a federal judge! Lambda Legal will continue to



The legal team leading PFLAG v. Trump.

fight back against this damaging effort to deny medically necessary health care to our youth.

As our second defense, we filed a federal lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the Trump administration’s ban on military service by transgender people. Once again attacking a vulnerable population based on bias, political opportunism and untrue ‘alternative facts,’ President Trump is seeking to deny courageous transgender people the opportunity to serve our country. He’s got to get through us first.

We are also monitoring the executive order for the Department of Education that calls for schools to wholly deny the existence of transgender people altogether. The order seeks to compel schools that rely on federal dollars to ban transgender students from using the correct restroom, participating in school sports, or even requesting that their name and pronouns be respected. This ban actively puts



LGBTQ+ students in harm's way. It not only opens LGBTQ+ youth, particularly trans youth, to harassment, bullying, and abuse, but in fact encourages it.

In addition to preventing trans youth from participating in school sports via the orders mentioned above, Trump went so far as to sign an additional executive order dedicated to barring transgender girls and women athletes from participating in interscholastic and collegiate sports. We are appalled and disgusted at the fearmongering about and relentless targeting of this most vulnerable population.

We are not deterred. Lambda Legal and our partners are standing together to protect those rights already won, and fight for those still needed, to allow the LGBTQ+ community and everyone living with HIV to live freely and safely as their full and authentic selves—a freedom everyone in this country should be able to enjoy.

Lambda Legal has been at the forefront of these and other fights for more than 50 years. We have faced hostile political landscapes before and have persevered through them. Thanks to supporters like you, we will continue to be here, protecting the most vulnerable in our communities, winning new freedoms, and defending everything we have gained.

FEARLESS + FIGHTING BACK



When LGBTQ+ Rights are under attack- what do we do?

WE FIGHT BACK!

In 2025 Lambda Legal is Fearless + Fighting Back against the Trump Administration. As this year continues, we can expect more hateful executive orders and policies at every level of government. Lambda legal is ready to defend our community against these attacks.

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES IT POSSIBLE.

We know many of you may be concerned about the new administration. That's why we launched the Fearless + Fighting Back campaign which will encompass the first 100 days of the Trump administration.

Head to the campaign website to access more resources.

[Lambdalegal.org/fightingback](https://lambdalegal.org/fightingback)



Donate today and support our expert legal team as they take the administration to court.
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