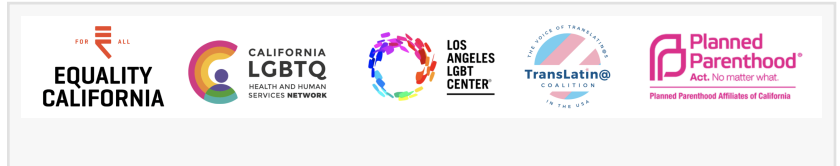


LGBTQ+ Leaders Urge California Lawmakers to Restore Devastating Cuts to Health Equity Programs

\$31 Million Slashed from LGBTQ+ Health Programs in Governor's Budget Threatens Critical Services Across the State



SACRAMENTO, CA, UNITED STATES,

May 21, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A broad coalition of leading LGBTQ+ advocacy organizations including Equality California, the Los Angeles LGBT Center, the California LGBTQ+ Health and Human Services Network, TransLatin@ Coalition, Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California, and more are calling on the Legislature to restore more than \$31 million in proposed budget cuts to the California Department of Public Health's Office of Health Equity (CDPH-OHE), which would eliminate dozens of programs serving LGBTQ+ communities across the state.

The Governor's May Revise for the 2025-26 State Budget proposes to eliminate two major CDPH-OHE initiatives: the California Reducing Disparities Project (CRDP) and the Gender Health Equity Section (GHES). The move would rescind funding already awarded through existing contracts to more than 68 contracted community-based organizations across California—more than half of which focus on LGBTQ+ populations, including trans, nonbinary, and BIPOC communities.

"The Governor's proposal to eliminate funding for several vital programs at OHE is deeply troubling and would have devastating consequences for LGBTQ+ Californians, immigrants, and communities of color," said Equality California Executive Director Tony Hoang. "It would force Equality California and many of our LGBTQ+ partner organizations to shut down trusted, culturally competent programs that are already saving lives across the state. As a state that has long claimed national leadership on equity and inclusion, California must double down on that commitment, not abandon the people who need its support most."

The proposed cuts include grant programs that were created with explicit legislative direction and funded by the Legislature in previous budget cycles. These include programs supporting LGBTQ health equity, LGBTQ+ foster youth, and access to reproductive healthcare. The grants fund grassroots mental health services, trauma-informed care, peer support, and capacity-building in underserved regions and communities too often overlooked by mainstream systems.

"These cuts come at a time when LGBTQ+ communities are already facing national rollbacks,

from Medicaid slashes and HIV treatment cuts to bans on gender-affirming care and shrinking access to mental health services,” said Dannie Ceseña, MPH, Director of the California LGBTQ+ Health and Human Services Network. “With trauma mounting from political attacks, California should be leading, not cutting lifelines. Slashing nearly half of the Office of Health Equity’s budget, the only state office specifically dedicated to addressing health disparities, breaks trust.”

During yesterday’s Senate and Assembly Budget Subcommittee hearings, legislators asked CDPH for clarification on the rationale and transparency of these cuts. LGBTQ+ and reproductive justice organizations have also organized community members and health equity advocates to speak out at upcoming budget hearings and submit public comments in opposition to these harmful cuts.

“Governor Newsom’s proposed cuts to the LGBTQ+ Health Equity Fund are a moral failure and a betrayal of California’s most vulnerable,” said Joe Hollendoner, CEO, Los Angeles LGBT Center. “Stripping lifesaving funding from over 68 community organizations—especially those serving LGBTQ women, trans, and nonbinary people—is indefensible. These programs shouldn’t be viewed as budget relief; they’re staffed, trusted, and saving lives. California must fully restore and expand this initiative. Our state’s legacy of health justice is at stake—and our communities cannot be left behind.”

“In this critical moment, California must double down, not retract, its efforts to advance health equity and reduce health disparities,” said Jodi Hicks, CEO and President of Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California. “As proud providers of community based health education programs in under-resourced areas throughout the state, the Planned Parenthood affiliates in California are dismayed by this proposal to eliminate critical CDPH OHE programs. These proposed cuts would impact real lives and be a departure from California’s commitment to eliminating gender-based health disparities and improving the health and well-being of Californians.”

The coalition of LGBTQ+ and reproductive justice organizations is urging the Legislature to fully restore funding to the Office of Health Equity’s California Reducing Disparities Project and Gender Health Equity Section in the final 2025-26 State Budget. With more than 68 community programs on the line, legislators must act swiftly to prevent irreparable harm to California’s LGBTQ+ communities. Equity cannot be protected in name only; it must be backed by the resources to deliver real impact.

“These aren’t just cuts—they’re an act of erasure,” said Bamby Salcedo, President and CEO of The TransLatin@ Coalition. “The state is pulling funding from programs that were already promised, already contracted, and already making an impact in our communities. You can’t claim to champion equity while dismantling the only infrastructure built to support TGI people. These programs are lifelines and we need the legislature to restore and expand these services.”

The coalition’s full public letter and list of organizational signatories will be submitted to the Legislature this week.

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