

TAKING A STEP BACK

story by **STACEE DILLARD & JORDAN RHYM**

layout by **EVERETT VEREEN**

visuals by **JULIE ALPAUGH**



United States President Donald Trump and his administration took protection away from transgender public school students on Feb. 22 by rescinding the previous policy, Title IX.

On Feb. 22, United States President Donald Trump and his administration rescinded Title IX, which provided federal protection for transgender students. This means that transgender students will no longer have guaranteed safety while using the bathrooms of the gender they identify with the most.

Former U.S. President Barack Obama created the policy Title IX. The Obama administration gave federal protection to transgender students through Title IX by warning schools they would be at risk of losing school funds, if they defied the recommendation.

I don't like how LGBTQ have been deemed as predators. When people say 'I want my daughter or my son to be safe,' I get that, but they are just trying to go to the bathroom.

-- JOHN DODSON,
Jostens Regional Sales Manager

"I'm disappointed that he took it back. I think it should be an act that should allow anyone to be who they are. You don't get to decide (whether or not you are transgender), and I don't think someone makes that choice. I think it's who they are," Jostens Regional Sales Manager John Dodson said. "I don't like how LGBTQ have been deemed as predators. When people say 'I want my daughter or my son to be safe,' I get that, but they are just trying to go to the bathroom."

Lori Osgood supports transgender advocates and believes the federal government should not be able to make laws on transgender rights.

"I feel that the person has the right to decide themselves," Lori Osgood said. "We elected people into office that make those decisions and hopefully they'll make decisions that the people want."

After federal protection was pulled, citizens began to protest outside of the White House in Washington, DC on Feb. 23 and created the hashtag #protecttranskids on Twitter in retaliation.

"I have been a part of many protests. I love protests, because you know, freedom and expressing yourself. You can't change who people are, and that's all people are trying to do," Ola High School sophomore and journalism student Cailyn Brooks said. "They're trying

to express themselves and be themselves and it's a free nation."

Gloucester High School senior Gavin Grimm, a 17-year-old transgender student, filed a lawsuit against President Trump's decision and will be moving his fight beyond his county's school board and presenting his case to the U.S. Supreme Court this month. The lawsuit fights that retracting the policy not only violates Title IX, but can also be deemed unconstitutional under the 14th Amendment.

"I think more people need to be (pushing for progress at a national level) because with all of the freedoms we have in America and being a free nation, I think that you should be able to express yourself in these ways. Having freedom of speech, I feel like is being violated a lot of the time and I think that needs to be addressed," Brooks said. "The fact that at such a young age, he is able to see that and is able to go the Supreme Court and talk about that, like I can't think of any other adjective but proud. That's the part of America that I'm proud to be apart of."

According to Stratford High School (SHS) sophomore and journalism student Jayden Simmons, SHS, unlike the University of South Carolina, does not have a club specifically for LGBTQ students. But, he does believe one will form soon.

"There are a few activists for transgenders at my school. I'm a supporter and there's a lot of people trying to get more and more involved inside of it. So yeah there people at Stratford trying to help out," Simmons said. "It's a growing population and more people are supporting it, so I wouldn't be surprised if we got one pretty soon."

I think that a lot of things going on politically have been steps backwards.

-- CAILYN BROOKS,
Ola High School sophomore

Brooks believes in the near future people will realize you can't change who people are.

"I think that a lot of things going on politically have been steps backwards, and there have been articles in our publication that were written about that and those are articles that I'm very proud of," Brooks said. "And so, bottom line, you can't change who somebody is and it's ignorant to think that you can."