

Around the world, societies are bearing witness to an unprecedented and exponential rise in anti-2SLGBTQI hate, and gender-critical movements are gaining momentum. In Canada, there is a growing reactionary movement threatening the safety, freedoms, and rights of 2SLGBTQI people, especially those who are Two Spirit, trans, nonbinary, and/or gender non-conforming. From coast to coast to coast, rising anti-2SLGBTQI hate has led to unacceptable consequences including discriminatory policies that violate 2SLGBTQI rights, rising hate crimes, and threats of violence against 2SLGBTQI community events. The message could not be clearer – 2SLGBTQI communities are under attack.

## Rising Tide of Violence Against 2SLGBTQI Individuals

Since 2018, Canada has experienced an alarming rise in anti-2SLGBTQI hate crimes. For example, Statistics Canada reported that in 2023, hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation rose by 69% from the previous year<sup>1</sup>. Since 2016 to 2023, this number has increased by 388%<sup>2</sup>. Statistics Canada also highlighted that “incidents motivated by hatred of gender diverse people were more often violent in nature, with 80% of incidents involving a violent violation”<sup>3</sup>.

However, these statistics are incomplete and fail to capture the full scale of hate being experienced by 2SLGBTQI communities. In Egale's 2023 *Pride Unravelled* campaign, we assessed the number of anti-2SLGBTQI protests and examples of online hate in Canada. In just the first three months of 2023, Egale documented 6,423 instances of violence, unreported threats, and attacks on 2SLGBTQI individual's right to exist<sup>4</sup>. This violence and abuse is not captured by reported hate crime statistics.

As CSIS and law enforcement have recognized, the anti-gender movement has made “strange bedfellows” among far-right actors, religious fundamentalists, and others<sup>5</sup>. The movement has gained strength in Canadian society, showing up in the form of coordinated national anti-trans protests and misinformation online.

In recent years, Canada witnessed an increase in anti-trans policies and policy proposals from municipal, provincial and federal levels of government. Some of these policies are shrouded in

---

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. (2024). *Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2023*.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/240725/dq240725b-eng.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada. (2024). *Police-reported hate crime, by type of motivation, selected regions and Canada*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510006601>

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada. (2021). *Police-reported hate crime in Canada, 2019*.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2021001/article/00002-eng.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Egale Canada. (2023). *Don't let them unravel our pride*. <https://egale.ca/egale-in-action/pride-2023-wont-unravel/>.

<sup>5</sup> Egale Canada. (2024). *Statement from Egale Canada re: CSIS warns that the 'anti-gender movement' poses a threat of 'extreme violence'*. <https://egale.ca/egale-in-action/csis-statement-feb15/>



discussions of neutrality, such as banning Pride flags in government spaces to appear non-partisan. Others serve to spread mis- and disinformation, putting 2SLGBTQI individuals' existence and legitimacy into question.<sup>6</sup> As a result, violence towards 2SLGBTQI individuals is now more politically and socially legitimized.

Specifically, over the past two years, Alberta, New Brunswick, and Saskatchewan have introduced harmful policies and legislation that contravene the rights of gender diverse students under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. School "pronoun policies" requiring parental permission for gender diverse students to *informally* change their names and/or pronouns—policies that a Canadian court has found *will cause irreparable harm to gender diverse youth*<sup>7</sup>—have been advanced through baseless suggestions that schools are promoting "gender ideology" without the knowledge of parents. In reality, inclusive school policies are rooted in evidence and ensure that all students are safe to attend school as they are<sup>8</sup>. Alberta has recently passed a ban on well-established and safe gender-affirming care for minors, an unprecedented example of government overreach into the private medical decisions of parents for their children and youth themselves. Again, in promoting this bill, the Government of Alberta employed disinformation about the nature and consequences of the medical care in question<sup>9</sup>.

A recent peer-reviewed report in *Nature* highlights that anti-trans legislation in the US—upon which the Albertan legislation is modeled—has caused up to a 72% increase in suicide attempts among trans and nonbinary young people aged 13-24<sup>10</sup>. More must be done to curb the rising tide of anti-2SLGBTQI violence and save lives.

All of the above political actions are possible because of the size of the gender diverse population of Canada. It is difficult to obtain accurate statistics, but the total gender diverse population is almost certainly less than 1% of the total population<sup>11</sup>. This means that the average Canadian does not know a trans person. In Canada, we are seeing some of our political leaders take advantage of this reality to spread of hate that has devastating real-life consequences for 2SLGBTQI individuals.

---

<sup>6</sup> An example includes the Conservative Party of Canada's approval of policies at their 2023 convention that would ban gender-affirming care for young people under 18 years of age, as well as preventing trans girls and women from participating in women's sports. <https://cpcassets.conservative.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/23175001/990863517f7a575.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> *UR Pride Centre for Sexuality and Gender Diversity v Saskatchewan (Education)*, 2023 SKKB 204 (CanLII), <https://canlii.ca/t/k0gn9>

<sup>8</sup> Egale Canada. (2021). *Still In Every Class In Every School*. <https://egale.ca/awareness/still-in-every-class/>

<sup>9</sup> Egale Canada. (2024). *What's Happening in Alberta? Egale Explains*. <https://egale.ca/awareness/alberta/>

<sup>10</sup> Nature. (2024). *State-level anti-transgender laws increase past-year suicide attempts among transgender and non-binary young people in the USA*. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-024-01979-5>

<sup>11</sup> Statistics Canada. (2022). *Canada is the first country to provide census data on transgender and non-binary people*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220427/dq220427b-eng.htm>



## Egale Recommends the Following Actions:

- Every federal political party should commit to not using the “Notwithstanding Clause” (section 33 of the *Charter*) to limit the rights of Canadians;
- Every federal political party should commit to basing policy decisions and political commitments with respect to 2SLGBTQI communities on expert and 2SLGBTQI community consensus and condemn the rampant rise of hate-filled violence and anti-2SLGBTQI language across Canada;
- The Government of Canada should involve, and allocate funding to 2SLGBTQI and other community organizations in the *National Action Plan on Combatting Hate’s* implementation strategy – including funding for creation, implementation and mobilization of tools, resources and education for 2SLGBTQI communities to identify and combat anti-2SLGBTQI hate;
- Expand reporting on hate motivated violence against 2SLGBTQI individuals, including online violence and hate speech, and emphasize the importance of collecting anti-2SLGBTQI hate crime data on both sexual orientation and gender identity.

## About Egale Canada

Egale is Canada’s leading organization for 2SLGBTQI people and issues. We improve and save lives through research, education, awareness, and by advocating for human rights and equality in Canada and around the world. Our work helps create societies and systems that reflect the universal truth that all persons are equal and none is other.