

## U.S. Supreme Court upholds ban on gender-affirming care for transgender minors



Photo via Adobe Firefly.

By Lisa Keen,  
Keen News Service

In a 6 to 3 decision led by Chief Justice John Roberts, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that states may ban gender dysphoria treatment for minors, even when their parents want it for their child.

Roberts said the specific law in

question –SB 1 from Tennessee— does not discriminate on the basis of sex because minors are prohibited from receiving gender dysphoria treatment “regardless of the minor’s sex.”

The majority said it rejects the plaintiffs’ argument that SB1 “enforces a government preference that

see **SCOTUS**, page 8

## Trump administration removing 988 hotline service tailored to LGBTQ+ youth

By Devi Shastri  
AP Health Writer

The 988 National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline will stop providing tailored support options to LGBTQ+ youth and young adults on July 17, according to a statement on a federal agency’s website.

The decision preempts the Trump administration’s 2026 budget propos-

al to cut funding for 988’s LGBTQ+ youth and young adult services, and is raising alarm bells among LGBTQ+ advocates.

Federal data shows the LGBTQ+ youth program has served nearly 1.3 million callers since it started in September 2022. The services were accessible under the “Press 3” option on the

see **HOTLINE**, page 10

The Official Guide to  
NEW ENGLAND  
**LGBTQ+**  
pride  
2025

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SEPTEMBER 7

11:00 AM - 4:00 PM Longmeadow Town Green, Longmeadow, MA; longmeadowpride.org



## Publisher of Books in Supreme Court Case Committed to LGBTQ+ Representation

by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com  
contributing writer

By the time this column appears, the U.S. Supreme Court may have decided in *Mahmoud v. Taylor*, a case revolving around LGBTQ+ inclusive books in public school classrooms. Two of the books in the case were published by Little Bee Books, whose CEO and editorial director spoke with me about LGBTQ+ inclusion, their partnership with LGBTQ+ media advocacy organization GLAAD, and the case itself.



CEO, Shimul Tolia and Editorial Director, Brett Duquette. Courtesy photos.



**“To be very clear, I am in ‘Pirates!’ until the end of the run of ‘Pirates!’...I told my agents, ‘I have to take August off... unless ‘Oh, Mary!’ calls. And then went, ‘Oh, Mary!’ called.”**

- Jinkx Monsoon announces she'll be the latest Mary on Broadway starting on August 4th.

Photo by Alec White.

more in Billy Masters on page 6!



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## Making War while mouthing peace

No Nobel for the king of liars

by Richard J. Rosendall | rrosendall@starpower.net  
contributing writer

Rep. Darrell Issa announced in March that he had nominated President Trump to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

"Not since Ronald Reagan has an American president better represented the national resolve of peace through strength or the fundamental case for a world without war," he wrote.

If you buy that, I would like to sell you Greenland.

After bombing three Iranian nuclear sites on June 21, Trump, the king of liars, wrote on Truth Social, "Now is the time for peace!" (He put that in all caps, but I don't like shouting at my readers.)

Trump quickly won praise from legislators ranging from House Speaker Mike Johnson to Democratic Sen. John Fetterman. I agree with House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries, who said Trump "misled the country about his intentions, failed to seek congressional authorization for the use of military force and risks American entanglement in a potentially disastrous war in the Middle East."

Democrats, however, are not exactly unified in their messaging. Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer, after slamming Trump for marching us into war "with erratic threats and no strategy," said, "Confronting Iran's ruthless campaign of terror, nuclear ambitions, and regional aggression demands strength, resolve, and strategic clarity."

I am no fan of Iran's leaders, to say the least, but can we please be more honest? It's absurd to decry regional aggression in the Mideast while ignoring or even applauding the aggression of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

American intelligence experts had said that Iran was not on the verge of developing nuclear weapons. But Trump did not want to hear that. He preferred to go with Netanyahu, who incidentally has nuclear weapons already and has

been engaged in a ruthless campaign of ethnic cleansing against Palestinians in Gaza.

If you think America getting bogged down in another war in that region is just what we need, good for you. But do not tell me this behavior is a recipe for peace.

Trump has long desired a Nobel Peace Prize. That's like a big game hunter wanting to be Dr. Dolittle.

Our 45th and 47th president, which is two presidencies more than he deserved, resents that President Obama won a Nobel and he didn't. Granted, the Nobel committee was so hasty in honoring Obama that even he was embarrassed. But Obama is sane and responsible, while Trump is a sociopath.

Instead of treating the prospect of war as a grave matter, Trump teased us over the bombing of Iran like someone on reality TV choosing a lover: "I may do it. I may not do it. Nobody knows what I'm going to do."

Republicans are as incoherent as their leader. On one hand are isolationists who want to avoid international entanglements. On the other are hawks so eager to get us into another conflict that they never paused to consider the long-term consequences.

The United States spends more on its defense than the next nine countries combined. Yet Republicans seek to add hundreds of billions of dollars to our military budget.

Peace cannot mean that we alone have the right to defend ourselves. Strength cannot mean pretending to be so threatened by the opinions of protesters that we have masked secret police grab them in the streets to deport them to foreign gulags.

Trump has no more credibility on the subject of peace than on free and fair elections. He is still so obsessed over his 2020 loss that he wants to appoint a special prosecutor to investigate Democrats.

But we cannot just blame politicians. Trump's power rests on millions of voters who behave like members of a cult, and on media that serve as enablers of his alternate reality.

A friend of mine spends far too much time on Facebook arguing with MAGAs. In response to his calling the military parade Trump threw for himself on his 79th birthday a flop, someone replied that the "No Kings" rallies across the country were also a flop. When my friend pointed out the huge numbers of people who showed up to protest Trump's dictatorial ambitions, the other guy called the protesters "speed bumps."

That is the sort of depraved remark that causes Trump supporters to congratulate themselves for "owning the libs." Never mind the fact that their determination to own people was what caused them to lose the Civil War.

How do we overcome this persistent nastiness and defiant, multigenerational ignorance? We can start by confronting those who bully others while portraying themselves as victims.

Richard Rosendall is a writer and activist who can be reached at rrosendall@me.com.

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**I am no fan of  
Iran's leaders, to  
say the least, but  
can we please be  
more honest? It's  
absurd to decry  
regional aggression  
in the Mideast  
while ignoring or  
even applauding  
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## GUEST OPINION

### GLAD Law and NCLR Respond to the Skrametti Supreme Court Ruling

Submitted by GLAD Law

The Supreme Court of the United States today issued its ruling in *United States v. Skrametti*, upholding Tennessee's ban on healthcare for transgender youth.

Today's decision has no impact in states where health care for transgender youth is not currently banned.

Every major medical association including the American Medical Association and the American Psychological Association support this care, backed by decades of research and relying upon the same safe and effective medications used to treat a range of other health issues for children and adults. Last month, in the most comprehensive

review to date, a new 1,000+ report commissioned by the Utah Legislature found that this care is supported by substantial evidence, is safe and effective, and reduces risk of suicidality.

GLAD Law Senior Director of Transgender and Queer Rights Jennifer Levi and National Center for LGBTQ Rights Legal Director Shannon Minter, both of whom have more than 30 years each of LGBTQ+ impact litigation experience, including on transgender health care cases, and are themselves transgender, responded to today's Supreme Court ruling:

"The Court today failed to do its job," said GLAD Law Senior Director of Transgender and Queer Rights Jennifer Levi. "When the political system breaks down and legislatures bow to

popular hostility, the judiciary must be the Constitution's backbone. Instead, it chose to look away, abandoning both vulnerable children and the parents who love them. No parent should be forced to watch their child suffer while proven medical care sits beyond their reach because of politics."

"The Court's ruling abandons transgender youth and their families to political attacks. It ignored clear discrimination and disregarded its own legal precedent by letting lawmakers target young people for being transgender," said National Center for LGBTQ Rights Legal Director Shannon Minter. "Healthcare decisions belong with families, not politicians. This decision will cause real harm."

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# billy masters

Just as we were closing in on the one-year anniversary of his arrest, **Austin Wolf** finally appeared in court for his preliminary hearing. As you'll undoubtedly recall, the Feds raided the gay porn superstar's home on June 28, 2024 and arrested him for sending and receiving hundreds of child sexual abuse videos. People kept asking for updates. Curiously, the preliminary hearing kept getting delayed in one-month increments...until last week. Wolf (real name: Justin Heath Smith) was on one side of the courtroom. The Assistant District Attorney was on the other. The charges were read, which included interstate commerce, enticing a minor to engage in activity in the facility of another individual, and oral sex with an individual younger than 17 years old. And then, Wolf pled guilty!

However, he made no mention of the child sexual abuse videos. "In late 2023 or early 2024, I induced a 15-year-old to engage in a sex act, I don't remember through text or [social media], but phones were definitely used. I know what I was doing was wrong. I apologize. I knew it was wrong when I did it. I don't blame anyone else for my conduct. It was another person engaging in the conduct. I take full 100 percent responsibility for my actions and I am prepared for the consequence," said Wolf in what sounds like a very carefully crafted statement. We're told the child sexual exploitation charges will be dropped in light of his admission of guilt to the more serious crime. The minimum mandatory charge is 10 years in prison. He will be sentenced on September 9th.

In a curious codicil to this story, one unknown man was in the courtroom. After the hearing, he identified himself as a "former fan" of Austin Wolf: "I wish I could get a refund on all the money I spent on his videos."

While Wolf was in court, Tyler Perry was slapped with a \$260 million lawsuit by actor **Derek Dixon**, who had the role of gay store clerk in "The Oval". According to the lawsuit, "Mr. Perry took his success and power and used his considerable influence in the entertainment industry to create a coercive, sexually exploitative dynamic with Mr. Dixon—initially promising him career advancement and creative opportunities, such as producing his pilot and casting him in his show, only to subject him to escalating sexual harassment, assault and battery, and professional retaliation when Mr. Dixon did not reciprocate Mr. Perry's unwanted advances." According to Dixon, he met Tyler while working at a party in 2019. Perry asked if he was an actor, and they exchanged numbers. There were quite a few texts (which Dixon has saved), and Tyler eventually gave him a role in the series "Ruthless". A month later, he gave Dixon a new car, allegedly because Tyler didn't like Dixon's Jeep! At no point did Dixon sense any quid pro quo. But he claims that Perry said his ideal relationship would be a male who he could provide for, who would be loyal, but emotionally detached. "Whoever ends up with me is gonna be a happy motherfucker." Where do I apply?

A few months later, Derek was at Tyler's for dinner. They drank a bit too much, so Perry suggested Derek spend the night in a guest room. Here is the lawsuit's account of what happened: "Dixon was tired and did not have pajamas and so he got into bed only wearing underwear. Before he knew what was happening, Dixon felt someone else slip into bed behind him and start rubbing Dixon's body around his inner thigh in a highly sexual and suggestive manner. Dixon turned around and saw that **Tyler Perry** was in bed with him." Derek allegedly told Tyler he wasn't really into sex and left quickly the next morning. Shortly thereafter, he got this text from Tyler: "I would hope you would let some one hold you and make love to you. You are missing the best years of your life my friend. Trust me. I hope you get past that block in your mind soon." Dixon told Tyler he was a devout Christian. Tyler responded, "What's it going to take for you to have guiltless sex?" Buddhism was mentioned as an option.

Shortly thereafter, Derek's role transitioned to Perry's other series, "The Oval". Around that time, Tyler asked if Derek was a top or a bottom. Dixon doesn't reveal his response, but claims Perry said he was a top. "When you have a big dick and when you hit the G-spot right on these bottoms, they go crazy." Around his birthday, Perry said that all he wanted was "Biscuits and BJ's", but all he ever got was "Biscuits" (which sounds good to me).

Derek pitched a pilot he wanted to shoot and Perry showed interest—and asked him to come to his house. They discussed the show over numerous alcoholic beverages. Derek tried to leave, but Perry wanted to show him a weight monitor he had. He instructed Derek to strip to his underwear to try it, which he did. Perry then allegedly pulled down Derek's underwear and slapped his buttocks. According to Derek, he protested but Tyler said, "Relax...just let it happen." The lawsuit describes the scene: "Dixon was naked, and being groped by a large, drunk, and sexually frustrated 6'5" man who had Dixon in his clutches." And then he came up with an idea—he told Perry he "couldn't do anything sexual because he was so hungry." So Tyler ordered a pizza—probably Domino's, because it would be there in 30 mins or less! Dixon then locked himself in the guest bathroom. The next day, Perry apologized for his actions and blamed it on the alcohol.

After more harassing calls and texts, Dixon started to believe Tyler was promising to produce his pilot in order to let the statute of limitations run out. He reported the situation to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and also said he would not return to "The Oval"—a decision he says cost him close to \$400K. Dixon claims Tyler told him he'd be in breach of contract if he told people why he quit. Dixon claims to be coming forward to help other people, and claims that Perry "has been using his power and influence to molest, abuse, and sexually assault impressionable and vulnerable employees and actors who look to him for guidance and mentorship while pursuing their dreams." How conveniently he forgets about the car, the jobs, and the pizza!

After two heavy subjects, let's turn to youth suicide. OK, certainly not a lighter subject. Over these many decades, I've written about the work done by The Trevor Project—the suicide prevention hotline specifically focusing on LGBTQ+ youths. I was unaware of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. You know how you can call 911 in case of an emergency? Well, apparently you can call 988 if you're having suicidal thoughts or concerns for someone else. And if you press 3, you would be connected to someone specifically catering to LGBTQI+ people under 25...until July 17th. The hotline, which is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), is a subsidiary of the US Health and Human Services Agency (HHS). They have determined that there's no need to specifically "silo LGB+ youth services"—note that the government took the "T" out (they also took out the "Q", the "I", and any other letters that follow). They claim this is to "focus on serving all help seekers, including those previously served through the Press 3 option". They also say, "Anyone who calls the Lifeline will continue to receive compassion and help." That remains to be seen. Critics claim the exclusion of the "T" only underscores the administration's attempt to erase the trans community. Trevor Project CEO **Jaymes Black** said, "Suicide prevention is about people, not politics." They will continue to be available to those in need.

Our "Ask Billy" question come from Linda in Maine: "I remember a while ago you wrote about seeing a production of 'Gypsy' with a Mama Rose who wasn't white. But everyone says **Audra** is the first. Am I crazy?"

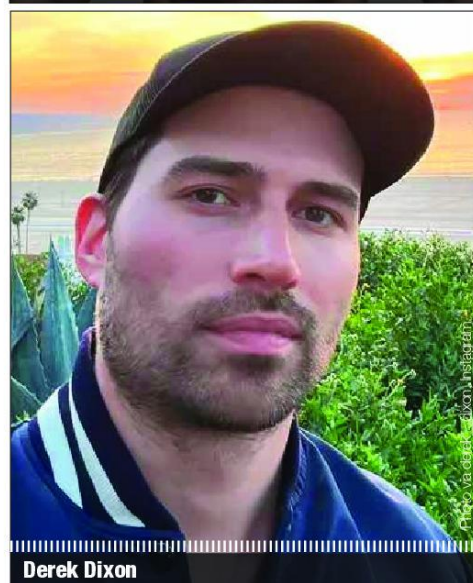
You may be—I'm no doctor. But you are also correct. Audra is not the first woman of color to play Mama Rose. She is, however, the first to do so on Broadway. You're obviously a longtime reader because **Leslie Uggams** played the role at the Connecticut Repertory Theatre in 2014. Uggams has also been the lead in "Hello, Dolly!", "Anything Goes", "Cabaret", "Mame", and even "Master Class"—a play also based on a real-life Caucasian woman (**Maria Callas**). Should you be curious, footage of Uggams in "Gypsy" can be found on BillyMasters.com.

When the Big Bad Wolf is staying put in the pokey, it's definitely time to end yet another column. It's also a good time to let Tyler Perry know that this writer is not only available, but loves pizza and biscuits! That said, I'm not what one would call discreet, as you'll see on [www.BillyMasters.com](http://www.BillyMasters.com)—the site that makes for good bedtime reading! If you have a question for me, send it to [Billy@BillyMasters.com](mailto:Billy@BillyMasters.com) (along with roses of assorted colors) and I promise to get back to you before I give anyone a refund. Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.



Austin Wolf

Photo via austinwolf, Instagram.



Derek Dixon

Photo via derek, Instagram.



Leslie Uggams

Photo by Kingkongphoto, via Wikimedia Commons.



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## SCOTUS

*Continued from page 1*

people conform to expectations about their sex.” “SB1 does not exclude any individual from medical treatments on the basis of transgender status. Rather, it removes one set of diagnoses — gender dysphoria, gender identity disorder, and gender incongruence — from the range of treatable conditions.”

U.S. v. Skrametti originated with one transgender girl and two transgender boys, whose parents filed suit after the Tennessee legislature banned medical treatment for young people diagnosed with gender dysphoria. (Gender dysphoria is defined by the medical profession as clinically significant discomfort that one’s sexual identity is different than one’s documented gender at birth.) A Memphis doctor, Susan Lacy, joined the lawsuit, which was successful at the district court. There, the judge ruled that the ban enables “disparate treatment on the basis of sex.” But the Sixth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals disagreed.

Both the transgender youth and the U.S. gov-

ernment appealed to the Supreme Court. The court accepted the appeal but posed the question with language many might read as putting a thumb on the scales of justice: Does “Tennessee Senate Bill 1 (SB1), which prohibits all medical treatments intended to allow ‘a minor to identify with, or live as, a purported identity inconsistent with the minor’s sex’ or to treat ‘purported discomfort or distress from a discordance between the minor’s sex and asserted identity’ violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.”

The court heard arguments in December, during the last month of President Biden’s administration. Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar, who spoke on behalf of the Biden administration’s opposition to Tennessee’s law, said it discriminates on the basis of sex, in violation of the equal protection clause. She also argued the court should scrutinize the law at a heightened level (greater than the easy requirement of simple rational basis). And she urged the Supreme Court to send the case back to the Sixth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals with instructions to examine the ban with that heightened level of scrutiny.

In February, the Department of Justice under President Trump wrote letter to the court, saying “The Department has now determined that SB1 does not deny equal protection on account of sex or any other characteristic. Accordingly, the new Administration would not have intervened to challenge SB1.” The letter carried the name of Curtis Gannon, deputy solicitor general.

Wednesday’s 6 to 3 vote broke down in the usual split: Dissenting justices were Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan, and Ketanji Brown Jackson.

Leading the dissent, Justice Sotomayor said the Tennessee “law conditions the availability of medications on a patient’s sex.

“By retreating from meaningful judicial review exactly where it matters most,” wrote Sotomayor, “the Court abandons transgender children and their families to political whims.

“In sadness, I dissent.”

“Today’s ruling is a devastating loss for transgender people, our families, and everyone who cares about the Constitution,” said Chase Strangio, Co-Director of the ACLU’s LGBTQ & HIV Project. “Though this is a painful setback, it does not mean that transgender people and

our allies are left with no options to defend our freedom, our health care, or our lives. The Court left undisturbed Supreme Court and lower court precedent that other examples of discrimination against transgender people are unlawful. We are as determined as ever to fight for the dignity and equality of every transgender person and we will continue to do so with defiant strength, a restless resolve, and a lasting commitment to our families, our communities, and the freedom we all deserve.”

“This is a heartbreaking ruling, making it more difficult for transgender youth to escape the danger and trauma of being denied their ability to live and thrive,” said Sasha Buchert, Counsel and Director of the Nonbinary and Transgender Rights Project at Lambda Legal. “But we will continue to fight fiercely to protect them. Make no mistake, gender-affirming care is often life-saving care, and all major medical associations have determined it to be safe, appropriate, and effective. This is a sad day, and the implications will reverberate for years and across the country, but it does not shake our resolve to continue fighting.”

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## Mombian

*Continued from page 1*

Little Bee, an independent children’s book publisher specializing in progressive and inclusive books, is “a very mission driven and focused company,” said CEO Shimul Tolia. One of its five core “pillars of publishing” focuses on LGBTQ+ acceptance. “We wanted to publish LGBTQ+ inclusive books because we were looking for gaps in the children’s publishing industry, and one of those gaps was content and storytelling that showcased the LGBTQ+ community,” explained Tolia. “We really wanted to tell stories that were overlooked or silenced.”

Daniel Haack’s “Prince & Knight” was “the book that started it all for us,” she said. After they received the story, in 2017, they started thinking about partnering with GLAAD, because they wanted to ensure that “the content we were putting out was respectful and all-encompassing of the community that we were trying to elevate and empower.” GLAAD, for its part, was seeking to do more outreach to families, she said, while Little Bee, as a children’s book publisher, had those connections. “It ended up being very mutually beneficial,” she observed.

Editorial Director Brett Duquette, a queer dad himself, said that more than 20 books have come from the partnership so far, with more in development. He said Little Bee is “always looking for stories that center the child,” and ones that “help our LGBTQ+ kids and families find themselves positively represented so they can feel valued.” They may even help adults “have the words that they might not organically have to share with their child.”

For example, Little Bee is working with GLAAD on “My Gender, My Rules,” by Andy Passchier, a nonfiction picture book coming out in November. “There’s been a lot of misinformation about gender and gender expression,” he said, and the book is meant “to help families and kids have important conversations about it.” Another recent title is “I Am Not a Vampire,” by actor and activist Miles McKenna,

illustrated by Riley Samels, “an allegory about finding your authentic self.”

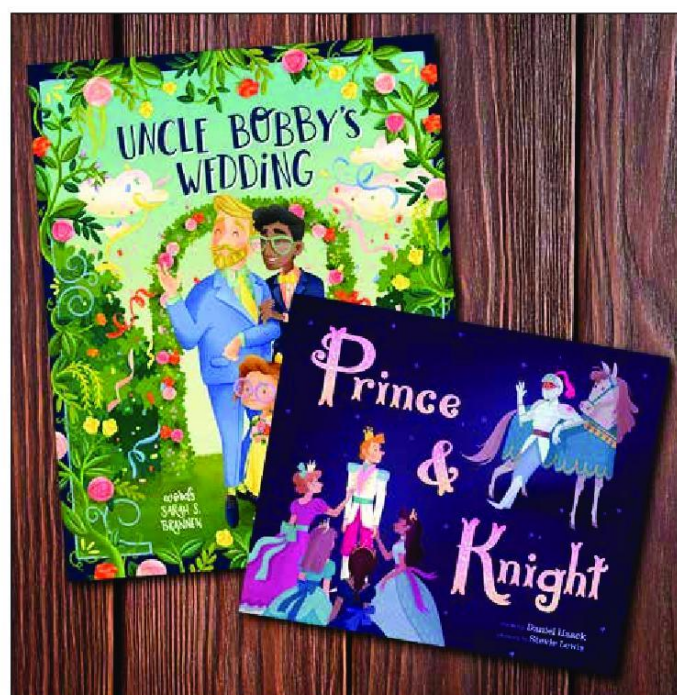
Perhaps the most well-known book from the partnership, however, is “Uncle Bobby’s Wedding,” by Sarah Brannen, illustrated by Lucia Soto, about a girl worried that her favorite uncle will no longer have time for her after he marries his boyfriend. It had originally been published elsewhere in 2008, but was republished by Little Bee with updated text and new illustrations in 2020. The new edition was named to multiple “best books” lists.

In 2022, both “Uncle Bobby’s Wedding” and “Prince & Knight” were among several LGBTQ+ inclusive picture books added to a list of optional, supplemental materials for Maryland’s Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). A group of parents, however, brought a lawsuit against MCPS, claiming their religious freedom was violated if they did not have a chance to opt out their children before the books were read in classrooms. The case was ultimately heard this past April by the U.S. Supreme Court, where Justice Samuel Alito tried to argue that the protagonist in “Uncle Bobby’s Wedding” had “reservations” about her uncle marrying a man, an interpretation that Brannen has publicly refuted.

Tolia said of the case, “The reason the [MCPS] educators brought these books in was to showcase the neighbors in that community. That to me, is really the crux of everything. If the books you’re bringing into school are to help the children see themselves or their neighbors, then I think it’s really sad that this case had to go all the way to the Supreme Court.”

She asserted, “I think that being exposed to ideas through our perspective and broadens our compassion, and that is what we are trying to teach children through our books,” adding, “I don’t think that violates somebody’s religious belief, that compassion and that understanding.”

At the same time, she said, “We’ll fully acknowledge our LGBTQ+ books are not meant for everyone.” Instead, “What we are here to do is offer a variety of different types of sto-



rytelling for people who do want to bring this content into their homes or communities.” She “completely respect[s]” whatever choice parents want to make within a household, but said, “It’s tougher when a household wants to make a decision for a community, and that’s when we’ll be there to ensure our voice is heard.”

That means supporting “the people on the frontline,” including librarians, teachers, and other educators “who often bear the brunt of a lot of the discourse around book bans,” she said. “That’s what we always try to do: support the people who are doing their best to stick up for this First Amendment that we all believe in.”

Duquette added, “We are going to continue to support our authors and the publishing part-

nership that we have with GLAAD. It’s important for LGBTQ+ kids and families and also families who are not members of the LGBTQ+ community to see these lives positively represented.”

And he emphasized, “The editors at Little Bee take our work very seriously about helping children see themselves, especially children who are sometimes not shown in a positive light. I want to ensure that we give them a book that says, ‘You’re valued, you exist.’”

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (mombian.com), a two-time GLAAD Media Award-winning blog for LGBTQ+ parents plus a searchable database of 1,800+ LGBTQ+ family books.



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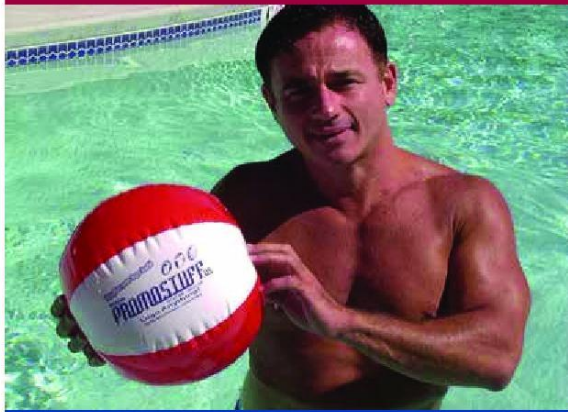
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## Hotline

Continued from page 1

phone or by replying "PRIDE" via text.

The decision was made to "no longer silo" the services and "to focus on serving all help seekers, including those previously served through the Press 3 option," the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) said in a statement dated Tuesday on its website.

News of the LGBTQ+ service shutting down comes as the U.S. Supreme Court upheld Tennessee's ban on gender-affirming care for transgender minors on Wednesday.

The Trevor Project said it received official notice Tuesday that the program was ending. The nonprofit is one of seven centers that provides 988 crisis support services for LGBTQ+ people — and serves nearly half of the people who contact the lifeline.

"Suicide prevention is about people, not politics," Trevor Project CEO Jaymes Black said in a statement Wednesday. "The administration's decision to remove a bipartisan, evidence-based service that has effectively supported a high-risk group of young people through their darkest moments is incomprehensible."

In its statement on the 988 decision, SAMHSA referred to the "LGB+ youth services."

Black called the omission of the "T" representing transgender people "callous." "Transgender people can never, and will never, be erased," he said.

The Trevor Project will continue to run its 24/7 mental health support services, as will other organizations, and leaders of 988 say the hotline

will serve anyone who calls with compassion.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said there were 49,300 suicides in 2023 — about the highest level in the nation's history, based on preliminary data.

Studies have shown that LGBTQ+ youth are at higher risk of suicide, including a 2024 analysis by the CDC that found 26% transgender and gender-questioning students attempted suicide in the past year. That's compared with 5% of cisgender male and 11% of cisgender female students.

Young transgender people flooded crisis hotlines with calls after President Donald Trump was re-elected. Trump made anti-transgender themes central to his campaign and has since rolled back many civil rights protections and access to gender-affirming care.

Trump signed the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 into law in October 2020.

The specific 988 subprogram for LGBTQ+ youth cost \$33 million in fiscal year 2024, according to SAMHSA, and as of June 2025, more than \$33 million has been spent on the services. The Trump administration's 2026 budget proposal called for keeping 988's total budget at \$520 million even while eliminating the LGBTQ+ services.

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. wants to wrap SAMHSA and other agencies into a new HHS office called Administration for a Healthy America, where it would coexist with employees from other agencies responsible for chemical exposures and work-related injuries.

*The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The AP is solely responsible for all content.*

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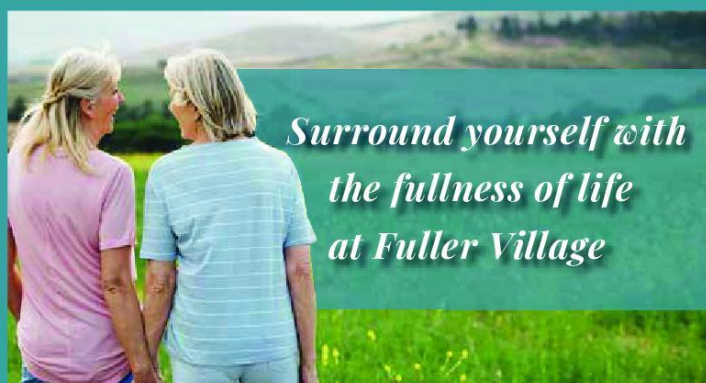


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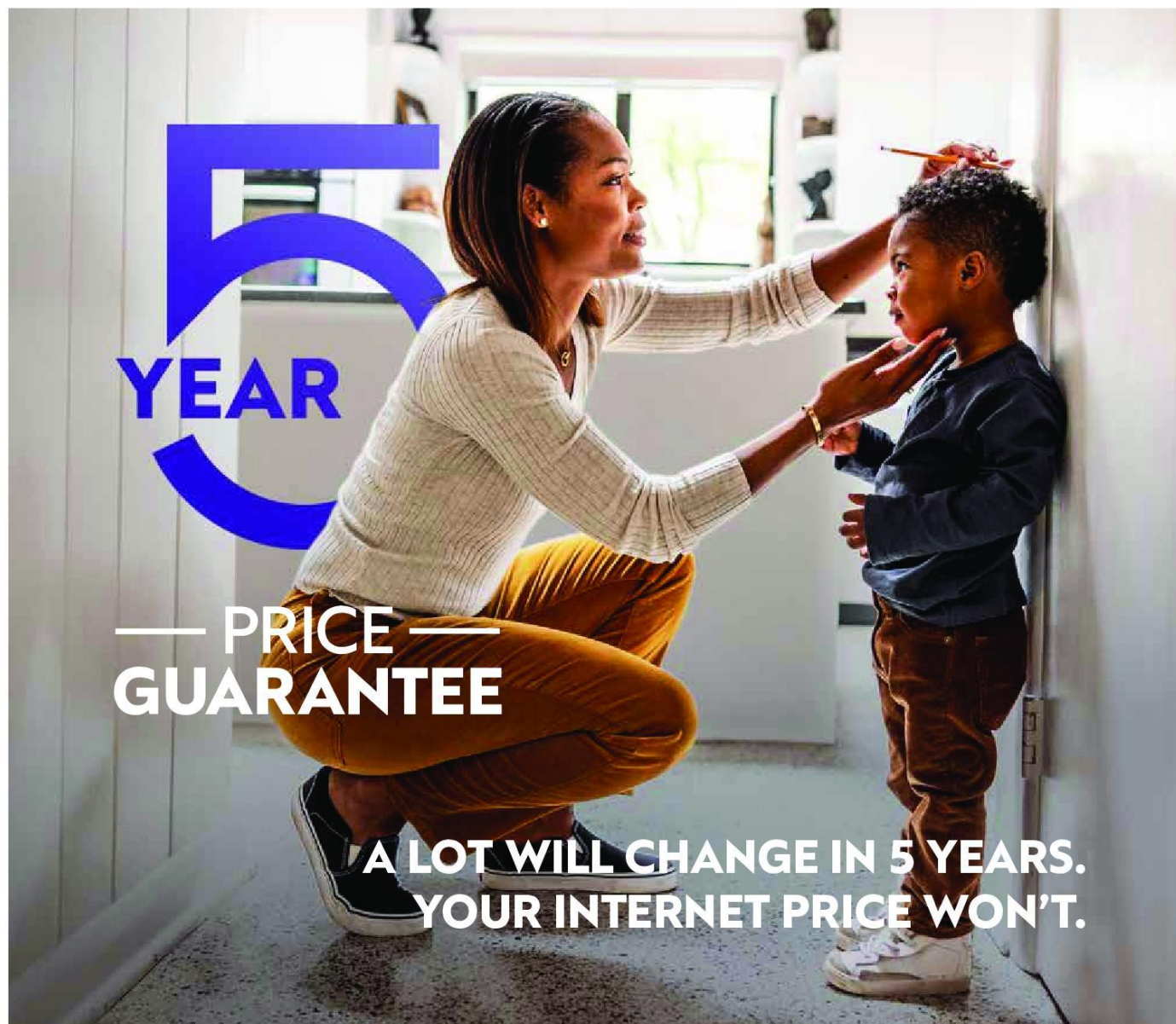
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