

# **2023 PRIDE MONTH MEDIA COVERAGE REPORT**

PREPARED BY  
**JEREMY M. HELFGOT**  
**J.M. HELFGOT COMMUNICATIONS**





## **Pride Month 2023 was a special moment in time.**

While every June is significant in marking the celebration of Pride Month and recognizing the history behind it, 2023 was different.

In ways that haven't been seen in decades, this year, the LGBTQ+ community is under attack. It's been a multi-pronged assault—targeting drag culture, transgender student athletes, rights to public accommodations, and more. Indeed, Pride Month 2023 ended with the Supreme Court of the United States handing down what is essentially a license to discriminate against LGBTQ+ individuals and allies on the basis of religious belief. We continue to see extremists targeting the LGBTQ+ community with threats and actions of violence and vandalism.

However, even as things were continuing to boil at the national level, here in the Valley of the Sun, Pride Month 2023 will be remembered for its triumphs.

June 2023 saw significant milestones for the Greater Phoenix LGBTQ+ community, some of which were years or even decades in the making.

The month began with Arizona Governor (and former Phoenix Pride staff member) Katie Hobbs hoisting four Pride Progress Flags to the top of the Executive Tower at Arizona's Capitol, the first such display in our state's 111-year history. Further, Gov. Hobbs continued to take actions throughout the month, in her ongoing and unwavering efforts to protect and defend the LGBTQ+ community from attacks, particularly those coming in the form of toxic policies put forth by the Arizona Legislature. Gov. Hobbs used her veto stamp and the power of her executive orders to both protect and extend rights for individuals living and working in our state, and we will forever be grateful for her support.

As June rolled on, we shared reasons to celebrate, with happenings around the Valley and the state. We celebrated our community with the annual Phoenix Pride Community Spirit Awards and Scholarship Presentations, crowned our second ever Mx. Phoenix Pride, and officially started the countdown to the 2023 Phoenix Pride Festival and Parade with our "Be in the Know" launch party event at which we revealed this year's parade and festival theme, parade grand marshals and festival headlining entertainers.

Throughout Pride Month, we also garnered an exceptional level of media coverage. From print and broadcast historic retrospective pieces, to coverage of current events, and continuing to advocate in support of equity and equality for all, Phoenix Pride was a constant and pervasive media presence throughout Pride Month, and I am happy to share with you highlights of that coverage in the following pages.

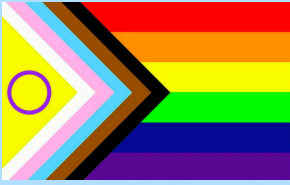
As we reflect on these tumultuous times, I remain honored to represent this incredible organization and the people who comprise it, and I look forward to continuing to tell Phoenix Pride's story in the months and years to come. You have my genuine and undying thanks for your ongoing support of that effort.

Respectfully,

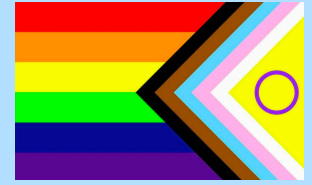
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Helfgot", written over a horizontal line.

Jeremy M. Helfgot

**J.M. HELFGOT**  
**COMMUNICATIONS**



# RAISE THE FLAG!



“For individuals and particularly for trans young people in Arizona who have found themselves under attack in the past several years, and under an attack that is continuing even as we speak, it’s critical for them to see and know that there are people in public leadership who do see them, who will defend them, and who will stand up for inclusion.”

“That kind of validation, especially in the face of so many attempts to invalidate individuals’ existence, is incredibly empowering. Symbols matter.”





# PRIDE MONTH PREVIEW

2018 PULITZER PRIZE WINNER

## ARIZONA REPUBLIC

TUESDAY, MAY 30, 2023 [azcentral.com](http://azcentral.com) PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

CELEBRATING PRIDE MONTH 1C



Arizona's LGBTQIA+ community will host drag shows, pageants and more. MEGAN MENDOZA/THE REPUBLIC

## THINGS TO DO

# HAPPY PRIDE

### CELEBRATE ALL MONTH LONG AT THESE 10 EVENTS

KIMI Robinson and Sofia Krusmark Arizona Republic | USA TODAY NETWORK

This June, drag shows, live music performances and pageants featuring members of Arizona's LGBTQIA+ community are taking place across metro Phoenix in honor of Pride Month. Fans of "The Real Housewives of Salt Lake City" and "RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars" have the chance to meet stars from the shows at two drag performances. If live sports is more your vibe, some of the city's teams are hosting special Pride nights. To see who's going to compete on behalf of Arizona at Miss Gay America, grab some tickets to Miss Gay Arizona America 2023. The Phoenix Pride Festival and Parade won't take place until late October, when (hopefully) cooler weather makes the outdoor events more comfortable to attend. Here's your guide to Pride Month events happening around metro Phoenix in June and July 2023.

See EVENTS, Page 3C

GETTY IMAGES

and meet-and-greet tickets (\$15 plus fees) can be purchased ahead on Eventbrite.

**Details:** 8 p.m. Saturday, June 10. Charlie's Phoenix, 727 W. Camelback Road. <https://www.eventbrite.com>.

#### Pride Night at Phoenix Rising

Phoenix Rising FC's Pride Night — in partnership with ONE Community, the Phoenix Gay Flag Football League and Revined Beer and Wine Bar — will take place during their home game against Oakland Roots SC on June 10. According to the team's theme night schedule, there will be a pregame happy hour during the PGFFL all-star game.

**Details:** 7:30 p.m. Saturday, June 10. Phoenix Rising Soccer Stadium, 3801 E. Washington St., Phoenix. From \$24, plus fees. 623-594-9606. <https://www.phxrisingfc.com/schedule>.

#### Desert Overture's celebration of music from LGBTQ+

Desert Overture, Phoenix's LGBTQ+ wind ensemble, "will be taking a look at

[dar.phoenixpubliclibrary.org/event/10394233](https://www.phoenixpubliclibrary.org/event/10394233).

#### Arizona Diamondbacks Pride Night

The Arizona Diamondbacks are up against the Cleveland Guardians for the MLB team's annual Pride night on June 17. Tickets start at \$25. The first 15,000 fans will receive a Pride bag.

**Details:** 7:10 p.m. Saturday, June 17. Chase Field, 401 E. Jefferson St., Phoenix. From \$27, plus fees. 602-514-8400. <https://www.mlb.com/dbacks/tickets/promotions/2023>.

#### Pride drag brunch with Whitney Rose from 'Real Housewives'

The Drag Bus is hosting a drag brunch starring Whitney Rose of "Real Housewives of Salt Lake City" fame alongside performers Paris Amour-McKenzie, Benaddiction, Kelly Rivera, Mynx Demilo, Salem Vee, Camilla Grandé, Lola VanHorn and Chanel Douglas.

Doors open for the 21-and-older event at 10:30 a.m. June 18 at Almost Famous in Old Town Scottsdale. There

distinguished the past to the group's web-mance, called starts at 3 p.m. for the Arts.

An LGBT band performed in which was among the country," actress's website. Monday, June 11. Arts, 700 W. Rio Salado. From \$15 for the ID, free for \$5. 480-350-2822. <https://www.eventbrite.com>.

#### Discussion

library's month-long on June 15 will "Sordid Lives," John, Leslie Jorthe virtual gathering Webex; register a link. "Sordid Lives," the to register for a card. films, sharing nest conversations faced by the is the event de-

Thursday, June <https://www.eventbrite.com>.



People watch as the Phoenix Pride Parade travels down Third Street toward Steele Indian School Park on Oct. 16, 2022. MEGAN MENDOZA/THE REPUBLIC

are VIP (\$600 for six people or \$1,000 for 10 people, plus taxes and fees) and Whitney Rose meet-and-greet (\$25 plus taxes and fees) options; all admission has a two-drink minimum.

**Details:** 11:30 a.m. Sunday, June 18. Almost Famous, 7419 E. Indian Plaza, Suite A, Scottsdale. From \$35, plus taxes and fees. <https://www.eventbrite.com>.

#### Phoenix Pride Awards Reception and Mx Phoenix Pride Pageant

The Phoenix Pride Awards Reception is back this year to honor exceptional individuals and organizations in the community. Miss Phoenix Pride 2011, Olivia Gardens, will host throughout the evening and will be joined by Aimee Justice for the Mx Phoenix Pride Pageant, which begins at 6 p.m.

A welcome cocktail and appetizers reception begin at 4 p.m., with the award presentation beginning at 4:30 p.m. Guests can stick around to see contestants compete for the title of Mx Phoenix Pride during the pageant, which has the theme of "heritage" this year.

**Details:** 4-9 p.m. Sunday, June 25. From \$20 for reception only, \$30 for reception and pageant, plus fees. Tempe Center for the Arts, 700 W. Rio Salado Parkway. 480-350-2822. <https://www.tempecenterforthearts.com>.

#### Phoenix Mercury Pride Night

Phoenix Mercury's annual Pride night — sponsored by Hornitos Tequila — returns on Thursday, June 29, when the WNBA team plays the Indiana Fever. This year's giveaway is Mercury bucket hats.

**Details:** 7 p.m. Thursday, June 29. Footprint Center, 201 E. Jefferson St., Phoenix. From \$25 plus fees. 602-379-7800. <https://mercury.wnba.com/themenights>.

#### Miss Gay Arizona America 2023: 'Gothic Gala'

The contestants who won their respective district pageants are on their way to Miss Gay Arizona America 2023, which takes place in downtown Phoenix on July 1 this year. Guests are invited to watch preliminary winners compete in various categories for a chance to make it to the national level at Miss Gay America, which is scheduled for January 2024.

This year's event, which has a "Gothic Gala" theme, will also honor Miss Gay Arizona America 2022, Janée Starr. Time and admission will be announced later.

**Details:** Saturday, July 1. Herberger Theater Center, 222 E. Montrose St., Phoenix. Tickets start at \$25. <https://www.missgayarizonaamerica.com>.

Reach the reporter at [kimi.robinson@gannett.com](mailto:kimi.robinson@gannett.com). Follow her on Twitter @kimirolbin and Instagram @ReporterKIMI.



# NATIONAL COVERAGE



## Bloomberg

Pursuits  
+ Equality

### Pride Planners: How We'll Celebrate Despite Anti-Drag, Anti-LGBTQ Laws

In America's ever-more-polarized political environment, annual celebrations of diversity are as fraught as ever. Here's what's happening with festivals big and small in states inundated with anti-LGBTQ legislation.



Nashville Pride Photographer: Jason Kempin/Getty Images

By Ella Ceron  
June 2, 2023 at 3:00 AM MST

In state legislatures across the US, lawmakers have introduced a record number of anti-LGBTQ bills this year, including anti-transgender and anti-drag laws. For organizations that produce the hundreds of annual Pride celebrations around the country, the show was always going to go on. The root of Pride, after all, is protest.

The current iterations of Pride are manifold, including festivals, parades and marches. They are also major economic drivers. LGBTQ nonprofits rely on Pride events to fund year-round programs, and local businesses bank on crowds spending money at bars, restaurants and hotels. The National LGBT Chamber of Commerce estimates that LGBTQ-owned businesses contribute more than \$1.7 trillion to the national economy each year. Much of that can be generated during Pride events, which typically occur in June.

1

## Bloomberg

June 2, 2023

laws at the state level targeting LGBTQ people, organizers in Tampa fear events, citing the state's political climate. Many groups are also concerned that pending lawsuits will determine whether they'll be able to stage

A state-level anti-drag law is due on Friday, June 2; as signed by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, it would classify drag as an "adult cabaret performance," ban it in public places or in places where a child might see one, and put performers at risk

Organizers plan to include drag performances in the hope that the lawsuit in Tampa, a Memphis nonprofit, will triumph. If not, they say they have no choice but to cancel, citing the danger of being sued, and the need for funding, protecting and supporting their performers is their avowed goal. Organizers in other hostile environments say.

Organizers in seven cities across five states impacted by such laws. They are also concerned about partnership concerns, how they intend to protect performers in drag and how they're anticipating higher-than-ever turnout as an

others as they prepare to take the stage, and why they're anticipating higher-than-ever turnout as an act of defiance and solidarity by the community.

Interviews have been edited for length and clarity.

### Phoenix Pride Festival, Arizona, Oct. 21-22



Phoenix Pride Source: Phoenix Pride

2

“We have a vibrant and very active drag community in Phoenix. You can see a professional drag performance just about every night of the week. We're talking about something that has a very real economic impact on people's lives — not only for the performers, but for the venues who host performances and the people who work at those venues, for people who do the ancillary work: costume designers, wigmakers, people who do makeup and choreography and music for these performances.”



# TEMPE FLAG INCIDENT



On June 6, it was revealed that a custom branded Pride flag being flown in honor of Pride Month at Tempe City Hall was removed from its flagpole, vandalized and burned, then left on city hall grounds. Phoenix Pride responded with a strong condemnation of the act, regardless of the as-yet-unknown motive, as the effects of the incident were felt by the community, regardless of the motivation.



June 6, 2023

"Both, as an organization and a community, we are appalled someone would target this symbol of unity, acceptance and belonging to the LGBTQ+ community," said Phoenix Pride Spokesman Jeremy Helfgot.

For members of the organization, he says, the Pride flag represents inclusion and celebration, especially during Pride month.

"To see it abused, like that, is a horrible affront. It's an act of ignorance and an act of hate," added Helfgot.



June 6, 2023



June 6, 2023

TEMPE

## Pride flag removed from Tempe City Hall and burned; investigation underway

No suspect has been identified by the Tempe Police Department and the matter continues to be under investigation. Both the flag and flagpole have been replaced and repaired by Tempe.

Fernando Cervantes Jr., Arizona Republic  
Published 4:01 p.m. MT June 6, 2023 | Updated 6:04 p.m. MT June 6, 2023

According to Jeremy Helfgot, spokesperson for Phoenix Pride, the organization was appalled and disheartened by the situation.

"The fact that this occurred in the city of Tempe is incredibly disheartening and alarming. Tempe as a city has been an incredible ally to the LGBTQ+ community," Helfgot said.



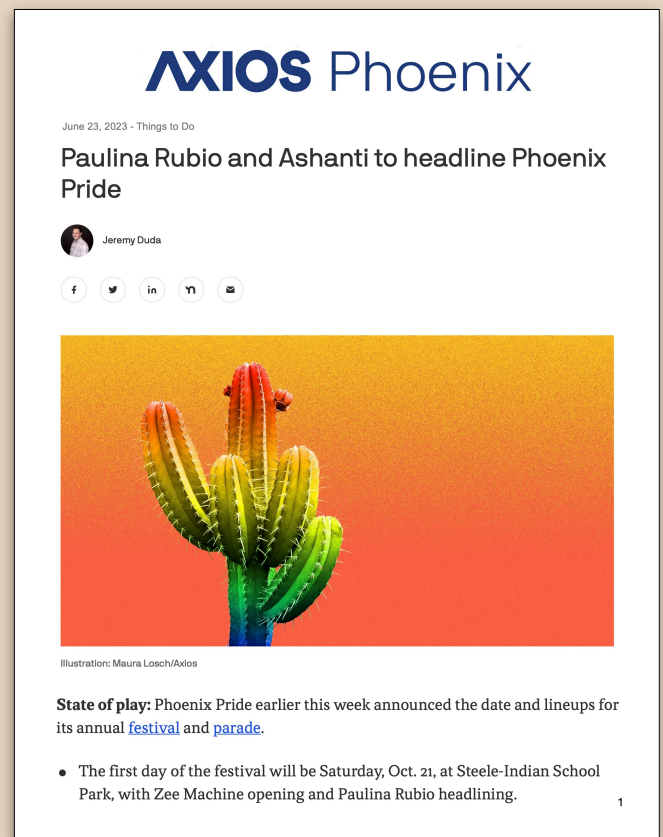
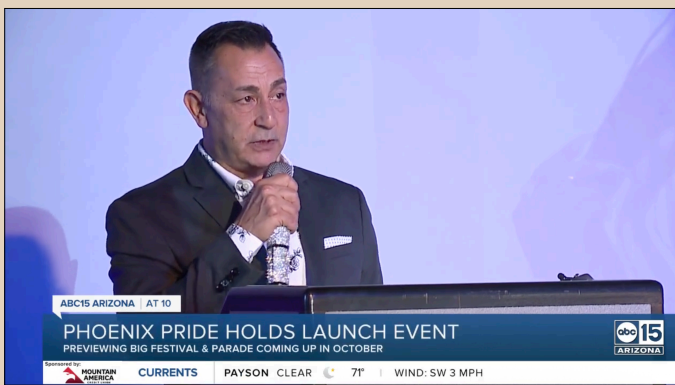


# 2023 PHOENIX PRIDE FESTIVAL & PARADE ANNOUNCEMENTS



On June 20, Phoenix Pride held an event at Kobalt at Park Central in Phoenix, to reveal the details for the 2023 Phoenix Pride Festival & Parade, including this year's theme, parade grand marshals and festival Main Stage, Latin Stage and VIP Experience headlining performers.

In addition to a print feature in the Arizona Republic, as well as pickups by several other print, digital and broadcast outlets, ABC 15 News, Ch. 12 News, and FOX 10 News were all there on-hand to cover the big announcements.





# ARIZONA REPUBLIC and AZCENTRAL.com PHOENIX PRIDE RETROSPECTIVE

During mid-June, we worked with the Arizona Republic to present a historic retrospective piece on Phoenix Pride, highlighting the more than four decades of Pride activities that have graced the Valley. In addition to providing extensive background, we arranged an interview for the reporter with longtime Phoenix Pride leader Ernie Mendoza, who was able to share, firsthand, the progress of the organization from that first Phoenix Pride march through to today. The piece ran digitally, with an extensive photo gallery, at AZCentral.com on June 18, and was in print, including a front page teaser, on June 27.

2018 PULITZER PRIZE WINNER

## ARIZONA REPUBLIC azcentral.com PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK



### Pride across the years

Phoenix's first Pride march in 1981 included about 650 people. Ernie Mendoza, one of the marchers in that first event, says it was "awesome." Now, the nonprofit Phoenix Pride draws up to tens of thousands of people to its annual parade and festival. 3A

Arizona Republic | TUESDAY, JUNE 27, 2023 | 3A

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### Pride

Continued from P

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#### Pride in Phoenix on anti-LGBTQ+

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Phoenix Pride sp  
Helfgot called the 1981 march "that very  
first moment of visibility" in Arizona.

LGBTQ+ residents would come to  
embrace the festival's openness, draw-

## VALLEY&STATE

### Pride's activism, celebrations in Valley grew from small start

Jose R. Gonzalez  
Arizona Republic  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Ernie Mendoza recalled June 27, 1981,  
not being as hot a summer day as what  
the Valley is now used to.

On that Saturday, Mendoza was a  
spectator of the grassroots Phoenix Gay  
and Lesbian Pride March. At 23 years  
old, he had not come out as gay yet. But  
something compelled him to join the  
crowd of about 100 people walking to  
the Arizona state Capitol.

"I thought this was awesome. Before I  
knew it, I was walking in it. I just didn't  
even think about it. I just got into the  
march," Mendoza, now 65, said. The

march "brought out the pride in me to be  
who the hell I am."

The march — Phoenix's first Pride  
event — eventually included about 650  
demonstrators. The Arizona Republic  
reported at the time. Now, the nonprofit  
Phoenix Pride draws up to tens of thou-  
sands to its annual parade and festival.

Drawing from The Republic's ar-  
chives, interviews with Mendoza and  
Phoenix Pride representatives, along  
with the organization's records, here is a  
look at the history of Pride's activism  
and celebrations in the Valley.

#### 1969 uprising originated Pride

Though Phoenix Pride now holds its

main events in the fall, Pride month  
has been federally recognized  
throughout June since 1999.

Many demonstrations, like Phoe-  
nix's 1981 march to the state Capitol,  
were organized to commemorate the  
three-day Stonewall riots in New York.  
Patrons at the Stonewall Inn clashed  
with the New York Police Department  
during a violent June 28, 1969, raid on  
Stonewall Inn, a gay bar. Stonewall  
then propelled the gay rights move-  
ment.

Pride Month also coincides with  
United States Supreme Court deci-  
sions affecting LGBTQ+ rights — the

See PRIDE, Page 10A

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ars, OK. You're in  
to know a whole  
you see people in  
everything. It

changed a lot for me," Mendoza said.  
Reach breaking news reporter Jose R.  
Gonzalez at jose.gonzalez@gan-  
nett.com or on Twitter @jrgztx.





# ADDITIONAL REPORTING



In service to the organization’s mission, Phoenix Pride also promotes coverage of broader LGBTQ+ issues and concerns, even when we are not the focus of—or even included in—the story. This June, we were involved in promoting several stories that highlighted LGBTQ+ events, issues and history throughout the Valley, but in particular, we connected 2022 Phoenix Pride Parade Community Grand Marshal and ABC 15 News Anchor/Reporter Nick Ciletti with past Phoenix Pride Parade Grand Marshal and former City of Phoenix Mayoral Policy Advisor Brendan Mahoney to talk about the tenth anniversary of the City of Phoenix adopting equal rights protections based on sexual orientation, and gender identity/expression.



NEWS > LOCAL NEWS



## 10 years later: Looking back at the passing of anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination laws in Phoenix

It was on Feb. 26, 2013, that the Phoenix City Council approved anti-discrimination protections for LGBTQ+ people



 **NICK CILETTI REPORTS**

Photo by: KNXV

**ESTABLISHED LGBTQ+ PROTECTIONS FOR**

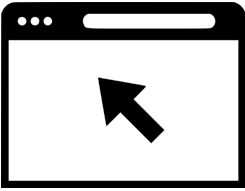
- EMPLOYMENT
- HOUSING
- ANY PUBLIC ACCOMMODATION

ABC15 | MORNINGS

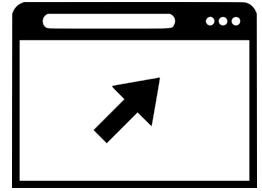
**LGBTQ+ PROTECTIONS IN PHOENIX**  
10 YEARS SINCE CITY COUNCIL PASSED ITS ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAW

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ACCIDENT CURRENTS SCOTTSDALE CLEAR 77°

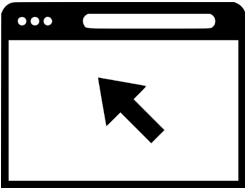


# SELECTED LINKS TO ONLINE COVERAGE

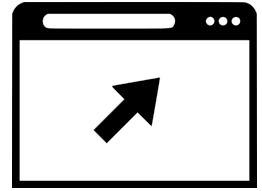


Following are links/URLs for selected items included in this report. This list is by no means comprehensive. The page number within this report on which each item is mentioned, is included for your reference.

Page	Item	Link
3	Arizona Republic - "Gov. Hobbs hangs pride flags from Capitol office tower" June 3, 2023 / June 1, 2023	<a href="http://pride.jmhelfgot.com/clips/2023/2023-06-03.pdf">http://pride.jmhelfgot.com/clips/2023/2023-06-03.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/politics/arizona/2023/06/01/arizona-governor-hobbs-hangs-lgbtq-pride-flags-from-state-capitol/70278716007/">https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/politics/arizona/2023/06/01/arizona-governor-hobbs-hangs-lgbtq-pride-flags-from-state-capitol/70278716007/</a>
3	Arizona Mirror - "Hobbs flies LGBTQ pride flags on the AZ executive tower..." June 1, 2023	<a href="http://pride.jmhelfgot.com/clips/2023/2023-06-01.pdf">http://pride.jmhelfgot.com/clips/2023/2023-06-01.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.azmirror.com/blog/hobbs-flies-lgbtq-pride-flags-on-the-az-executive-tower-for-first-time-ever/">https://www.azmirror.com/blog/hobbs-flies-lgbtq-pride-flags-on-the-az-executive-tower-for-first-time-ever/</a>
4	Arizona Republic - Things To Do: "Happy Pride" May 30, 2023	<a href="http://pride.jmhelfgot.com/clips/2023/2023-05-30.pdf">http://pride.jmhelfgot.com/clips/2023/2023-05-30.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.azcentral.com/story/entertainment/events/2022/06/09/pride-month-phoenix-2022-10-ways-celebrate-june/10002001002/">https://www.azcentral.com/story/entertainment/events/2022/06/09/pride-month-phoenix-2022-10-ways-celebrate-june/10002001002/</a>
5	Bloomberg - "Pride Planners: How We'll Celebrate Despite...Anti-LGBTQ+ Laws" June 2, 2023	<a href="http://pride.jmhelfgot.com/clips/2023/2023-06-02.pdf">http://pride.jmhelfgot.com/clips/2023/2023-06-02.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-06-02/pride-planners-how-we-ll-celebrate-despite-anti-drag-anti-lgbtq-laws">https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-06-02/pride-planners-how-we-ll-celebrate-despite-anti-drag-anti-lgbtq-laws</a>
6	Ch. 15 News (ABC) - "Pride flag burned at Tempe City Hall" June 6, 2023	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xt01q-bqrNo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xt01q-bqrNo</a> <a href="https://www.abc15.com/news/region-southeast-valley/tempe/pride-flag-burned-at-tempe-city-hall-police-investigating">https://www.abc15.com/news/region-southeast-valley/tempe/pride-flag-burned-at-tempe-city-hall-police-investigating</a>
6	Arizona Republic / AZCentral.com - "Pride flag removed from Tempe City Hall..." June 8, 2023 / June 6, 2023	<a href="http://pride.jmhelfgot.com/clips/2023/2023-06-08.pdf">http://pride.jmhelfgot.com/clips/2023/2023-06-08.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/tempe/2023/06/06/tempe-city-hall-pride-flag-burned-possible-hate-crime/70295631007/">https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/tempe/2023/06/06/tempe-city-hall-pride-flag-burned-possible-hate-crime/70295631007/</a>
6	Ch. 12 News (NBC) - "Pride flag outside of Tempe City Hall burned" June 6, 2023	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90Lt6vQeo80">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90Lt6vQeo80</a> <a href="https://www.12news.com/article/news/local/valley/pride-flag-outside-tempe-city-hall-burned/75-f60e1af7-6773-4a83-a5ba-2f4e014bc770">https://www.12news.com/article/news/local/valley/pride-flag-outside-tempe-city-hall-burned/75-f60e1af7-6773-4a83-a5ba-2f4e014bc770</a>
7	Arizona Republic / AZCentral.com - Things To Do: "Your complete guide to Phoenix..." July 6, 2023 / June 28, 2023	<a href="http://pride.jmhelfgot.com/clips/2023/2023-07-06.pdf">http://pride.jmhelfgot.com/clips/2023/2023-07-06.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.azcentral.com/story/entertainment/events/2023/06/28/phoenix-pride-parade-festival-guide/70342529007/">https://www.azcentral.com/story/entertainment/events/2023/06/28/phoenix-pride-parade-festival-guide/70342529007/</a>
7	Axios Phoenix - "Paulina Rubio and Ashanti to headline Phoenix Pride" June 23, 2023	<a href="http://pride.jmhelfgot.com/clips/2023/2023-06-23.pdf">http://pride.jmhelfgot.com/clips/2023/2023-06-23.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.axios.com/local/phoenix/2023/06/23/phoenix-pride-paulina-rubio-ashanti-headline">https://www.axios.com/local/phoenix/2023/06/23/phoenix-pride-paulina-rubio-ashanti-headline</a>

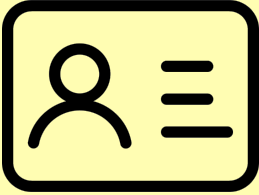


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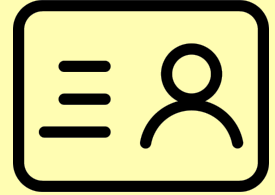


Following are links/URLs for selected items included in this report. This list is by no means comprehensive. The page number within this report on which each item is mentioned, is included for your reference.

Page	Item	Link
7	Ch. 15 News (ABC) - "Phoenix Pride holds launch event" June 20, 2023	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_cuwJPDhUx4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_cuwJPDhUx4</a> <a href="https://www.abc15.com/news/region-phoenix-metro/central-phoenix/phoenix-pride-previews-new-festival-and-talks-about-progress">https://www.abc15.com/news/region-phoenix-metro/central-phoenix/phoenix-pride-previews-new-festival-and-talks-about-progress</a>
7	Ch. 12 News (NBC) - 2023 Phoenix Pride Festival and Parade Launch Party coverage June 20, 2023	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUT2GkCbVDA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUT2GkCbVDA</a>
8	Arizona Republic - "Pride's activism, celebrations in Valley grew from small start" June 27, 2023 / June 18, 2023	<a href="http://pride.jmhelfgot.com/clips/2023/2023-06-27.pdf">http://pride.jmhelfgot.com/clips/2023/2023-06-27.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/phoenix/2023/06/18/original-phoenix-pride-marcher-remembers-early-days-event/70333521007/">https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/phoenix/2023/06/18/original-phoenix-pride-marcher-remembers-early-days-event/70333521007/</a>
9	Ch. 15 News (ABC) - "10 Years Later: Looking back at the passing of anti-LGBTQ+...laws..." June 19, 2023	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09NpWjioVyc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09NpWjioVyc</a> <a href="https://www.abc15.com/news/local-news/10-years-later-looking-back-at-the-passing-of-anti-lgbtq-discrimination-laws-in-phoenix">https://www.abc15.com/news/local-news/10-years-later-looking-back-at-the-passing-of-anti-lgbtq-discrimination-laws-in-phoenix</a>



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# APPENDIX: SELECTED CLIPS

**J.M. HELFGOT**  

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**COMMUNICATIONS**

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4A | SATURDAY, JUNE 3, 2023 | THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC



One of four Pride flags, hung by Gov. Katie Hobbs, is positioned on a 9th floor balcony at the State Capitol Executive building. MEGAN MENDOZA/THE REPUBLIC

## Gov. Hobbs hangs pride flags from Capitol office tower

Stacey Barchenger

Arizona Republic  
USA TODAY NETWORK

In 2019, then-Secretary of State Katie Hobbs hung two flags celebrating the gay and transgender communities from the Arizona Capitol. Within hours, she was forced to take them down by the GOP-majority Legislature.

Four years later, Hobbs on Thursday hung four rainbow and transgender pride flags seven floors up, from the balconies of her gubernatorial office suite.

This time, there was no one to tell her — the highest-ranking state official — to take them down.

The governor and her staff hung the 10-by-15-foot progress pride flags from the state's Executive Office Tower early on the first day of LGBTQ pride month.

The political statement reaffirms the Democratic governor's commitment to LGBTQ communities and taunts conservative lawmakers who have spent this year's legislative session pressing forward culture war issues, such as limiting the use of preferred pronouns for minors and limiting drag shows. Hobbs has vetoed or pledged to veto all of those bills.

"To the LGBTQ+ Arizonans, we celebrate the light and energy you bring to our state, and I will continue to work alongside you until we have an Arizona where everyone, no matter who they are or who they love, has the safety, freedom, and opportunity to truly live their authentic lives," Hobbs said in a statement on Thursday.

Progress pride flags have the traditional rainbow associated LGBTQ pride flags, but with white, pink and light blue stripes to represent transgender people and black and brown stripes to honor communities of color, according to the Human Rights Campaign, a LGBTQ advocacy organization. Hobbs was narrowly elected in November and, while previously serving as a state lawmaker, also worked in the leadership of Phoenix Pride. Her first executive order signed as governor prevented discrimination in the state's business and employment matters on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation.

### Why Hobbs had to take flags down in 2019

In 2019, her first year in office after she was elected secretary of state, Hobbs hung pride flags from the historic Capitol building, prompting an objection from legislative counsel who said the flags were not allowed and had to come down. That 2019 incident is widely believed to be the first time an Arizona official had displayed a pride flag at the Capitol.

Ultimately forcing Hobbs to take

down the flags was a "powerful reminder of how much ignorance and bigotry and hatred was still out there," said Jeremy Helfgot, spokesperson for Phoenix Pride. "To be here four years later to see now-Gov. Hobbs return to hang those flags once again, and knowing that in her elevated position there aren't going to be those same challenges is a real triumph."

Helfgot said the flags were an important symbol, especially amid GOP culture wars against drag artists and transgender adults and youth.

Two years ago, Arizona's Republican-majority Legislature and then Gov. Doug Ducey, a Republican, enacted laws banning transgender girls from playing sports and prohibiting gender reassignment surgery for minors. Hobbs and her veto power have served as a backstop to several bills GOP lawmakers are pushing this year that LGBTQ advocates have deemed hateful to their communities.

"For individuals and particularly for trans young people in Arizona who have found themselves under attack in the past several years, and under an attack that is continuing even as we speak, it's critical for them to see and know that there are people in public leadership who do see them, who will defend them, and who will stand up for inclusion," Helfgot said.

Two of Hobbs' flags waved in the breeze overlooking the Arizona Legislature, which was quiet Thursday while lawmakers are in a recess, but whose members represent more political extremes than in years past.

One of the farthest right lawmakers, Sen. Anthony Kern, R-Glendale, wrote on social media Thursday that June was a month to celebrate "wedding(s) between one man and one woman; not celebrate perversion and debauchery."

Kern did not respond to questions about his homophobic post. As to the flags, Kern said in a statement that Hobbs was virtue signaling for her "woke base" and would rather use taxpayer resources to "propagandize for her far-left base than engage in the real issues facing Arizonans."

### 'It's a historic day'

Those views are not in line with most Americans, over 6 in 10 of whom favorably view legalization of same sex marriage, according to a Pew Research Center survey from October. A separate Pew survey in May 2022 found Americans' views on transgender people were much more complex, with most favoring anti-discrimination protections but an almost even number saying society has gone too far or not far enough toward accepting them.

The giant and brightly colored flags, which Hobbs' campaign touted in a fundraising email hours later, are visible evidence of the stylistic shift in the Governor's Office.

ARIZONA DIVERSITY LAW &amp; GOVERNMENT

A TO Z

# Hobbs flies LGBTQ pride flags on the AZ executive tower for first time ever

BY: GLORIA REBECCA GOMEZ - JUNE 1, 2023 4:40 PM



Gov. Katie Hobbs hung LGBTQ pride flags from the Executive Tower on June 1, 2023, to mark Pride Month. Screenshot via @AZHouseDems/Twitter

For the first time, pride flags are flying from Arizona's executive tower.

On Thursday, the start of the official month-long celebration of LGBTQ communities across the country, Gov. Katie Hobbs decorated the Ninth Floor balcony with four pride flags. The Democrat, a staunch supporter of LGBTQ rights, vowed in a statement to continue working to ensure equality for all Arizonans.

"I'm proud to stand tall for an Arizona that's for everyone, including the LGBTQ+ community," she said. "To the LGBTQ+ Arizonans, we celebrate the light and energy you bring to our state, and I will continue to work alongside you until we have an Arizona where everyone, no matter who they are or who they love, has the safety, freedom and opportunity to truly live their authentic lives."

Her outspoken support sharply contrasts the bevy of discriminatory bills passed by the Republican-majority legislature just steps away from her office.

Under former Gov. Doug Ducey, GOP lawmakers barred trans girls from participating in school sports and took away the ability of trans minors to direct their own health care. But Hobbs this session has served as a bulwark against renewed vitriol, wielding her veto stamp to reject attempts to ban preferred pronouns in schools and prevent trans women from working in shelters.

And with a spate of discriminatory legislation still poised to land on her desk, she has continued to voice her opposition to laws that attack the rights of LGBTQ Arizonans.

Bridget Sharpe applauded the presence of pride flags at the state Capitol, and characterized them as an extension of Hobbs' track record of support for the community. Sharpe is the director of the Arizona chapter of the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest LGBTQ advocacy organization.

"The Human Rights Campaign is grateful for Gov. Katie Hobbs' public and vocal support for the LGBTQ+ community," she said in an emailed statement. "From displaying pride flags to vetoing discriminatory legislation, she has been a crucial ally to LGBTQ+ Arizonans — particularly transgender youth."

This isn't the first time Hobbs has draped Capitol buildings in pride flags, but it's the first time they're guaranteed to stay up, said Jeremy Helfgot, spokesman for Phoenix Pride. In 2019, Hobbs placed a gay pride and a trans pride flag on the balcony of the historic state Capitol building, but they were quickly removed by legislative staff who cited violations of event and display rules. Helfgot, who at the time condemned the removal, estimated they remained up for less than two hours.



### Pride flags hung from Capitol building for 1st time, then quickly removed

Flags representing LGBTQ communities that were hung from Arizona's historic Capitol building for the first time ever Friday morning to mark the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots were removed just hours after they were put up.



The difference between the 2019 incident, which he called a sobering reminder of bigotry, and Hobbs' undeniable support is impactful, Helfgot said.

“We have a significant portion of our population in the state who are living in part or in whole in the proverbial closet,” he said. “So, to be seen in that way, to be acknowledged by a state government that has often been — and continues to be in some areas — very oppressive is a very powerful reminder that...people who are in positions of leadership do see the community and recognize and value the LGBTQ+ population.

“That kind of validation, especially in the face of so many attempts to invalidate individuals' existence, is incredibly empowering. Symbols matter.”

Jeanne Woodbury, a lobbyist for Equality Arizona, a pro-LGBTQ advocacy group, said that, while putting up flags may seem like a small gesture, the repeated willingness of Hobbs to make public statements of support is encouraging for LGBTQ Arizonans. Doing so doesn't come without political risk, she said.

In her first act as governor, Hobbs issued an executive order that directed the state's department of administration to enforce non-discrimination laws in all hiring practices and expanded that directive to include LGBTQ rights. Republican lawmakers were outraged and threatened to take her to court over the order. So far, no legal action has materialized.

“This is something that sends a signal not just that we have the support of the governor, but that she is willing to take risks for us,” Woodbury said.

Hobbs wasn't alone in marking the official start of LGBTQ pride month. In a stark contrast to past administrations, each of the three Democratic statewide officeholders celebrated the beginning of pride month.

“Every Arizonan should be empowered to take pride in their true selves,” tweeted Attorney General Kris Mayes, the state's first openly gay AG.

“It's more important than ever that our elected officials and state offices and agencies work to protect and promote the civil rights of LGBTQ+ Arizonans,” tweeted Secretary of State Adrian Fontes.

And the LGBTQ Caucus of the state legislature, headed by Democrats, celebrated the kickoff in a statement on Twitter, but also warned that the battle for equality continues, especially in the face of hostility from GOP politicians.

“Pride Month is a celebration of hard-won civil rights and the message that everyone is equal and deserving of full protection under the law,” said Rep. Oscar De Los Santos, D-Laveen. “We cannot let far-right politicians and hate groups further undermine that progress. Let this month be a reminder of how far we have come, but also how much work there still is to do to end attacks on the LGBTQ community.”

2018 PULITZER PRIZE WINNER

# ARIZONA REPUBLIC

TUESDAY, MAY 30, 2023 [azcentral.com](http://azcentral.com) PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK



Arizona's LGBTQIA+ community will host drag shows, pageants and more. MEGAN MENDOZA/THE REPUBLIC

## THINGS TO DO

# HAPPY PRIDE

### CELEBRATE ALL MONTH LONG AT THESE 10 EVENTS

KiMi Robinson and Sofia Krusmark Arizona Republic | USA TODAY NETWORK

This June, drag shows, live music performances and pageants featuring members of Arizona's LGBTQIA+ community are taking place across metro Phoenix in honor of Pride Month. ● Fans of "The Real Housewives of Salt Lake City" and "RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars" have the chance to meet stars from the shows at two drag performances. If live sports is more your vibe, some of the city's teams are hosting special Pride nights. To see who's going to compete on behalf of Arizona at Miss Gay America, grab some tickets to Miss Gay Arizona America 2023. ● The Phoenix Pride Festival and Parade won't take place until late October, when (hopefully) cooler weather makes the outdoor events more comfortable to attend. ● Here's your guide to Pride Month events happening around metro Phoenix in June and July 2023.

See **EVENTS**, Page 3C

## Events

Continued from Page 1C

### Phoenix Gay Men's Chorus: Born to Be Brave

The Phoenix Gay Men's Chorus is performing "Born to Be Brave," "a high-energy musical production about five people auditioning for the Phoenix Gay Men's Chorus," on the afternoon of June 3. Joining them on stage are more than 70 singers and three dance troupes.

The group will perform songs that span a range of pop culture favorites, such as "Dear Evan Hansen," "Hamilton," Lady Gaga, Bruno Mars, My Chemical Romance and Cyndi Lauper.

**Details:** 2-4 p.m. Saturday, June 3. Tempe Center for the Arts, 700 W. Rio Salado Parkway. \$30, \$25 for age 65 and older, \$15 for age 12 and younger; plus fees. 480-350-2822, <https://www.tempecenterforthearts.com>.

### 'Glow: Neon Party' with Kahanna Montrese of 'RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars'

Pride at Night AZ will host "Glow: Neon Party Featuring Kahanna Montrese" — who's among the current Season 8 cast of "RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars" — at Charlie's Phoenix. General admission for the 21-and-up event will be available at the door; VIP (\$100 plus fees for table; includes four meet-and-greet passes) and meet-and-greet tickets (\$15 plus fees) can be purchased ahead on Eventbrite.

**Details:** 8 p.m. Saturday, June 10. Charlie's Phoenix, 727 W. Camelback Road. <https://www.eventbrite.com>.

### Pride Night at Phoenix Rising

Phoenix Rising FC's Pride Night — in partnership with ONE Community, the Phoenix Gay Flag Football League and Rewined Beer and Wine Bar — will take place during their home game against Oakland Roots SC on June 10. According to the team's theme night schedule, there will be a pregame happy hour during the PGFFL all-star game.

**Details:** 7:30 p.m. Saturday, June 10. Phoenix Rising Soccer Stadium, 3801 E. Washington St., Phoenix. From \$24, plus fees. 623-594-9606, <https://www.phxrisingfc.com/schedule>.

### Desert Overture's celebration of music from LGBTQ+

Desert Overture, Phoenix's LGBTQ+ wind ensemble, "will be taking a look at

some of the most distinguished LGBTQ+ composers from the past to the present," according to the group's website. This year's performance, called Composed with Pride!, starts at 3 p.m. June 11 at Tempe Center for the Arts.

They are named after "an LGBT band of the same name that performed in Phoenix in the 1980s, which was among the first LGBT bands in the country," according to Desert Overture's website.

**Details:** 3-5 p.m. Sunday, June 11. Tempe Center for the Arts, 700 W. Rio Salado Parkway. \$20 plus fees, \$15 for seniors and students with ID, free for children 12 and younger; there is a \$5 surcharge at the door. 480-350-2822, <https://desertoverture.org/performances>.

### LGBTQ virtual film discussion

The Phoenix Public Library's monthly LGBTQ film discussion on June 15 will focus on the 2000 film "Sordid Lives," starring Olivia Newton-John, Leslie Jordan and Beau Bridges. The virtual gathering will take place over Webex; registration is required to receive a link. "Sordid Lives" is free to view on Kanopy; the library has a page on how to register for an account with your library card.

"It's all about watching films, sharing stories and having an honest conversation about the tough issues faced by the LGBTQ community," reads the event description.

**Details:** Noon-1 p.m. Thursday, June 15. 602-262-4636, <https://calendar.phoenixpubliclibrary.org/event/10394233>.

### Arizona Diamondbacks Pride Night

The Arizona Diamondbacks are up against the Cleveland Guardians for the MLB team's annual Pride night on June 17. Tickets start at \$25. The first 15,000 fans will receive a Pride bag.

**Details:** 7:10 p.m. Saturday, June 17. Chase Field, 401 E. Jefferson St., Phoenix. From \$27, plus fees. 602-514-8400, <https://www.mlb.com/dbacks/tickets/promotions/2023>.

### Pride drag brunch with Whitney Rose from 'Real Housewives'

The Drag Bus is hosting a drag brunch starring Whitney Rose of "Real Housewives of Salt Lake City" fame alongside performers Paris Amour-McKenzie, Benaddiction, Kelly Rivera, Mynx Demilo, Salem Vee, Camilla Grandé, Lola VanHorn and Chanel Douglas.

Doors open for the 21-and-older event at 10:30 a.m. June 18 at Almost Famous in Old Town Scottsdale. There



People watch as the Phoenix Pride Parade travels down Third Street toward Steele Indian School Park on Oct. 16, 2022. MEGAN MENDOZA/THE REPUBLIC

are VIP (\$600 for six people or \$1,000 for 10 people, plus taxes and fees) and Whitney Rose meet-and-greet (\$25 plus taxes and fees) options; all admission has a two-drink minimum.

**Details:** 11:30 a.m. Sunday, June 18. Almost Famous, 7419 E. Indian Plaza, Suite A, Scottsdale. From \$35, plus taxes and fees. <https://www.eventbrite.com>.

### Phoenix Pride Awards Reception and Mx Phoenix Pride Pageant

The Phoenix Pride Awards Reception is back this year to honor exceptional individuals and organizations in the community. Miss Phoenix Pride 2011, Olivia Gardens, will host throughout the evening and will be joined by Aimee Justice for the Mx Phoenix Pride Pageant, which begins at 6 p.m.

A welcome cocktail and appetizers reception begin at 4 p.m., with the award presentation beginning at 4:30 p.m. Guests can stick around to see contestants compete for the title of Mx Phoenix Pride during the pageant, which has the theme of "heritage" this year.

**Details:** 4-9 p.m. Sunday, June 25. From \$20 for reception only, \$30 for reception and pageant, plus fees. Tempe Center for the Arts, 700 W. Rio Salado Parkway. 480-350-2822, <https://www.tempecenterforthearts.com>.

### Phoenix Mercury Pride Night

Phoenix Mercury's annual Pride night — sponsored by Hornitos Tequila — returns on Thursday, June 29, when the WNBA team plays the Indiana Fever. This year's giveaway is Mercury bucket hats.

**Details:** 7 p.m. Thursday, June 29. Footprint Center, 201 E. Jefferson St., Phoenix. From \$25 plus fees. 602-379-7800, <https://mercury.wnba.com/the-menights>.

### Miss Gay Arizona America 2023: 'Gothic Gala'

The contestants who won their respective district pageants are on their way to Miss Gay Arizona America 2023, which takes place in downtown Phoenix on July 1 this year. Guests are invited to watch preliminary winners compete in various categories for a chance to make it to the national level at Miss Gay America, which is scheduled for January 2024.

This year's event, which has a "Gothic Gala" theme, will also honor Miss Gay Arizona America 2022, Janeé Starr. Time and admission will be announced later.

**Details:** Saturday, July 1. Herberger Theater Center, 222 E. Monroe St., Phoenix. Tickets start at \$25. <https://www.missgayarizonaamerica.com>.

Reach the reporter at [kimi.robinson@gannett.com](mailto:kimi.robinson@gannett.com). Follow her on Twitter @kimirobin and Instagram @ReporterKimi.

# Bloomberg

Pursuits  
+ Equality

## Pride Planners: How We'll Celebrate Despite Anti-Drag, Anti-LGBTQ Laws

In America's ever-more-polarized political environment, annual celebrations of diversity are as fraught as ever. Here's what's happening with festivals big and small in states inundated with anti-LGBTQ legislation.



Nashville Pride Photographer: Jason Kempin/Getty Images

By Ella Ceron

June 2, 2023 at 3:00 AM MST

In state legislatures across the US, lawmakers have introduced a record number of anti-LGBTQ bills this year, including anti-transgender and anti-drag laws. For organizations that produce the hundreds of annual Pride celebrations around the country, the show was always going to go on. The root of Pride, after all, is protest.

The current iterations of Pride are manifold, including festivals, parades and marches. They are also major economic drivers. LGBTQ nonprofits rely on Pride events to fund year-round programs, and local businesses bank on crowds spending money at bars, restaurants and hotels. The National LGBT Chamber of Commerce estimates that LGBTQ-owned businesses contribute more than \$1.7 trillion to the national economy each year. Much of that can be generated during Pride events, which typically occur in June.

In the wake of increasingly hostile laws at the state level targeting LGBTQ people, organizers in Tampa and St. Cloud, Florida, canceled their events, citing the state’s political climate. Many groups are closely watching state courts, where pending lawsuits will determine whether they’ll be able to stage drag events during Pride.

A ruling in Tennessee regarding a state-level anti-drag law is due on Friday, June 2; as signed by Governor Bill Lee, a Republican, it would classify drag as an “adult cabaret performance,” ban performances on public property or in places where a child might see one, and put performers at risk of being charged with a felony.

Pride organizers in Tennessee still plan to include drag performances in the hope that the lawsuit brought by Friends of George’s, a Memphis nonprofit, will triumph. If not, they say they have contingency plans. Whatever the ruling, protecting and supporting their performers is their avowed top priority, as Pride organizers operating in other hostile environments say.

Bloomberg spoke with Pride organizers in seven cities across five states impacted by such laws. They discussed their security and sponsorship concerns, how they intend to protect performers in drag and others as they prepare to take the stage, and why they’re anticipating higher-than-ever turnout as an act of defiance and solidarity by the community.

Interviews have been edited for length and clarity.

### **Phoenix Pride Festival, Arizona, Oct. 21-22**



Phoenix Pride Source: Phoenix Pride

*Lawmakers in Arizona have introduced at least 11 anti-LGBTQ bills this year. Governor Katie Hobbs, a Democrat, last month vetoed a bill that would ban school employees from referring to a transgender or nonbinary child by their name and pronouns unless the child's parent approved it.*

**JEREMY HELFGOT**, Spokesperson, Phoenix Pride: Our Pride Festival and parade is in October to avoid the summer heat, but we will be active during Pride month with a number of events, as well as some civic engagements like Pride flag raisings.

We have a vibrant and very active drag community in Phoenix. You can see a professional drag performance just about every night of the week. We're talking about something that has a very real economic impact on people's lives—not only for the performers, but for the venues who host performances and the people who work at those venues, for people who do the ancillary work: costume designers, wigmakers, people who do makeup and choreography and music for these performances.

We're excited to present our drag pageants, but obviously there is concern. Drag culture is under severe attack. We've seen toxic actions coming out of the Arizona legislature. Thankfully, our current governor, Katie Hobbs (who is a former employee of Phoenix Pride), has been a longtime ally of the community. She has already made clear that she will veto these bills. It still sends a terrible, chilling message, and it creates doubt and uncertainty for those in the community.

We had more than 30,000 attendees at the Phoenix Rainbows festival in April, and our signature annual event draws crowds at and above 50,000. We use 35 acres of festival space, seven stages of live entertainment.

Part of building safe spaces is the sense of welcoming and acceptance, but we also have to take into consideration physical security. We work constantly with public safety partners at the local, state and federal level.

LGBTQ+ folks are part of the broader community. These are friends, family members, neighbors, co-workers, teammates, people who are ingrained in our everyday life around us. And these are people who deserve the same respect, the same dignity, the same honor and the same rights as everyone else.

The fallout from that has spread beyond the chambers of our legislature into extremist activity down at the community level in particular. These individuals are mobilizing, they're showing up in person, they are showing up—in many cases—armed. It's a very real and serious threat that we have to take into consideration constantly.

# ARIZONA REPUBLIC

THURSDAY, JUNE 8, 2023

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Arizona Republic | THURSDAY, JUNE 8, 2023 | 3A

## VALLEY & STATE

### Pride flag removed from Tempe City Hall and burned

**Fernando Cervantes Jr.**

Arizona Republic  
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Tempe Police Department is investigating a possible hate crime after the Pride flag that hung outside of the Tempe City Hall building was removed and burned.

The flag, raised at various city facilities across Tempe, included the logo of the city to commemorate the LGBTQ+ community and Pride Month.

According to a representative with Tempe, the Pride flag was replaced and the flagpole that was damaged was repaired. An investigation is ongoing and is being conducted by the Tempe Police

Department.

“This act of aggression does not represent our community. Hate has no place in Tempe. We are committed to championing diversity, inclusion, and equity and ensuring that our community is safe and welcoming for

**See FLAG, Page 15A**

## Flag

Continued from Page 3A

everyone,” City Manager Andrew Ching said in an emailed statement.

The Pride flag was joined by the American flag, the Arizona flag and a Juneteenth flag, but none of those flags were damaged. Tempe Mayor Corey Woods condemned the vandalism and pledged his support to the LGBTQ+ community.

“We will not stand by while someone tries to threaten, bully and intimidate members of our community. We will continue our efforts to make our city stronger, even more welcoming, and even more inclusive. We support our LGBTQ+ community. We stand as one with them,” Woods said in an emailed statement.

According to Jeremy Helfgot, spokesperson for Phoenix Pride, the organization was appalled and disheartened by the situation. “The fact that this occurred in the city of Tempe is incredibly

disheartening and alarming. Tempe as a city has been an incredible ally to the LGBTQ+ community,” Helfgot said.

This isn’t the first incident reported against the LGBTQ+ community in Tempe. In February, a drag story hour had to be temporarily halted due to a reported bomb threat targeting Brick Road Coffee, a local LGBTQ+ friendly coffee shop.

Bills targeting LGBTQ+ people, and in particular the trans community, were introduced almost from the start of this year’s legislative session across the U.S. In Arizona in particular, legislators have targeted everything from personal pronouns and who uses what restroom, to public drag shows and the banning of books.

An investigation of the flag burning was underway and Tempe police were “exploring all avenues,” the department said in a tweet, which also urged the public’s help in providing information about the incident.

Anyone with information regarding the incident was asked to contact Tempe police at 480-350-8311.

## THINGS TO DO



# *YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO PHOENIX PRIDE FESTIVAL AND PARADE*

Tiffany Acosta Arizona Republic | USA TODAY NETWORK

Get ready, queens: Phoenix Pride is set to celebrate the Valley's LGBTQ+ community. ● The 2023 Phoenix Pride festival and parade will take place Oct. 21-22 at Steele Indian School Park. There will be music, entertainment and hundreds of local vendors, businesses and organizations each day. ● The parade will celebrate the LGBTQ+ community and the progress made in Arizona over the past four decades. "But it's also a celebration of community as a whole," said Jeremy Helfgot, spokesperson for Phoenix Pride. "This is an event that is open and welcoming to anyone who wants to come and participate positively." ● Want to experience it? Here's everything to know about the 2023 Phoenix Pride Festival and parade. **See PRIDE, Page 6C**



# Pride

Continued from Page 1C

## When is Phoenix Pride 2023?

Phoenix Pride takes place noon-9 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 21-22, at Steele Indian School Park.

## Why is Phoenix Pride in October?

June is Pride Month, but the weather in metro Phoenix then is not conducive to large, all-day outdoor events. Thus, Phoenix Pride is celebrated in October.

"We hold off until things cool down in the fall," Helfgot said. "The safety of everyone who participates in Pride is always paramount to us. And obviously, there would be an immediate danger to health and safety if we were to do it in the triple-degree temperatures of mid-June."

## What are Phoenix Pride and the Phoenix Pride Parade?

Phoenix Pride is one of the largest LGBTQ+ events in the Valley.

The Pride Parade is a festive procession through the streets of downtown. It features diverse participants, including LGBTQ+ people, allies, organizations, businesses and community groups. The parade showcases floats, marchers, vehicles, artists and performance elements that reflect the community's spirit, culture and activism.

The parade raises awareness about LGBTQ+ issues, promotes inclusivity and equality and celebrates the LGBTQ+ community in Phoenix.

"We always welcome guests still to this day who might not identify as allies or as part of the community, but who are curious, who want to learn, who maybe haven't had exposure to the LGBTQ+ community and want to know about the culture," Helfgot said.

## What to expect at Phoenix Pride 2023

An array of booths, vendors and activities will be available. Here's a sampling:

- Main stage and Latin stage performances.
- Dance pavilion.
- Family-friendly drag performances.
- Food vendors.
- Kids space with bounce house, photo booth, music and crafts for ages 12 and younger.
- Exhibitor marketplace.
- VIP experience with complimentary drinks and food.

## Phoenix Pride 2023 concerts

### Main stage:

- **Saturday:** Zee Machine at 7 p.m., Paulina Rubio at 8 p.m.
- **Sunday:** Niki Harris & Donna De Lory at 7 p.m., Ashanti at 8 p.m.

### Latin stage:

- **Saturday:** Mar Solis, Jessica Esoterica, Jessica



Miss Phoenix Pride 2023 Veronica Savage Rose holds a "Savage" fan during a drag show at Phoenix Pride's Rainbows Festival on April 2, 2023. MEGAN MENDOZA/THE REPUBLIC

## Phoenix Pride 2023 Festival and Parade

**When:** Noon-9 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 21-22.

**Where:** Steele Indian School Park, 300 E. Indian School Road, Phoenix.

**Admission:** Starting at \$30; free for age 12 and younger and active military with ID.

**Details:** phoenixpride.org.

Wild from 5-7 p.m.

**Sunday:** Mar Solis, Jessica Esoterica, Naysha Lopez at 5 p.m., Mariana Seoane at 6 p.m.

VIP ticketholders can enjoy exclusive entertainment by Jessica Wild and Naysha Lopez from "RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars."

## Phoenix Pride 2023 tickets

Phoenix Pride is keeping the tradition of holding down ticket prices.

"Phoenix Pride has continued to freeze the cost of admission at all levels and all categories," Helfgot said. "We are not raising prices this year, we did not raise prices last year. That is due in part to the incredible generosity of our sponsor partners who continue to be very generous with their support."

Tickets start at \$30. Taxes and fees are extra. Admission is free for children 12 and younger and active-duty military members who present ID.

There are discounts at the gate for people age 55 or

older, ages 13-17, and military veterans.

"We're working to continue to make things as affordable as possible and as accessible as possible," Helfgot said.

Ticket prices are as follows:

- One-day general admission: \$30.
- One-day general admission with express entry: \$35.
- Two-day general admission with express entry: \$50.
- VIP Experience, for ages 18 and older, includes exclusive entertainment, a spot in front of the main stage, a buffet, two complimentary drinks per day, and an air-conditioned space. Passes are \$100 for one day and \$150 for both days.

Go to phoenixpride.org to purchase tickets in advance.

## What time does the Phoenix Pride Parade start?

The parade starts at 10 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 22. It begins at the intersection of Thomas Road and Third Street in downtown Phoenix and moves north up Third Street to Indian School Road.

## Is the Phoenix Pride Parade free?

The parade is free to attend. Spectators are encouraged to line Third Street's east and west sides for the best views.

Got a story you want to share? Reach out at [Tiffany.Acosta@arizonarepublic.com](mailto:Tiffany.Acosta@arizonarepublic.com). Follow @tiffsario on Instagram.

# AXIOS Phoenix

June 23, 2023 - Things to Do

## Paulina Rubio and Ashanti to headline Phoenix Pride



Jeremy Duda

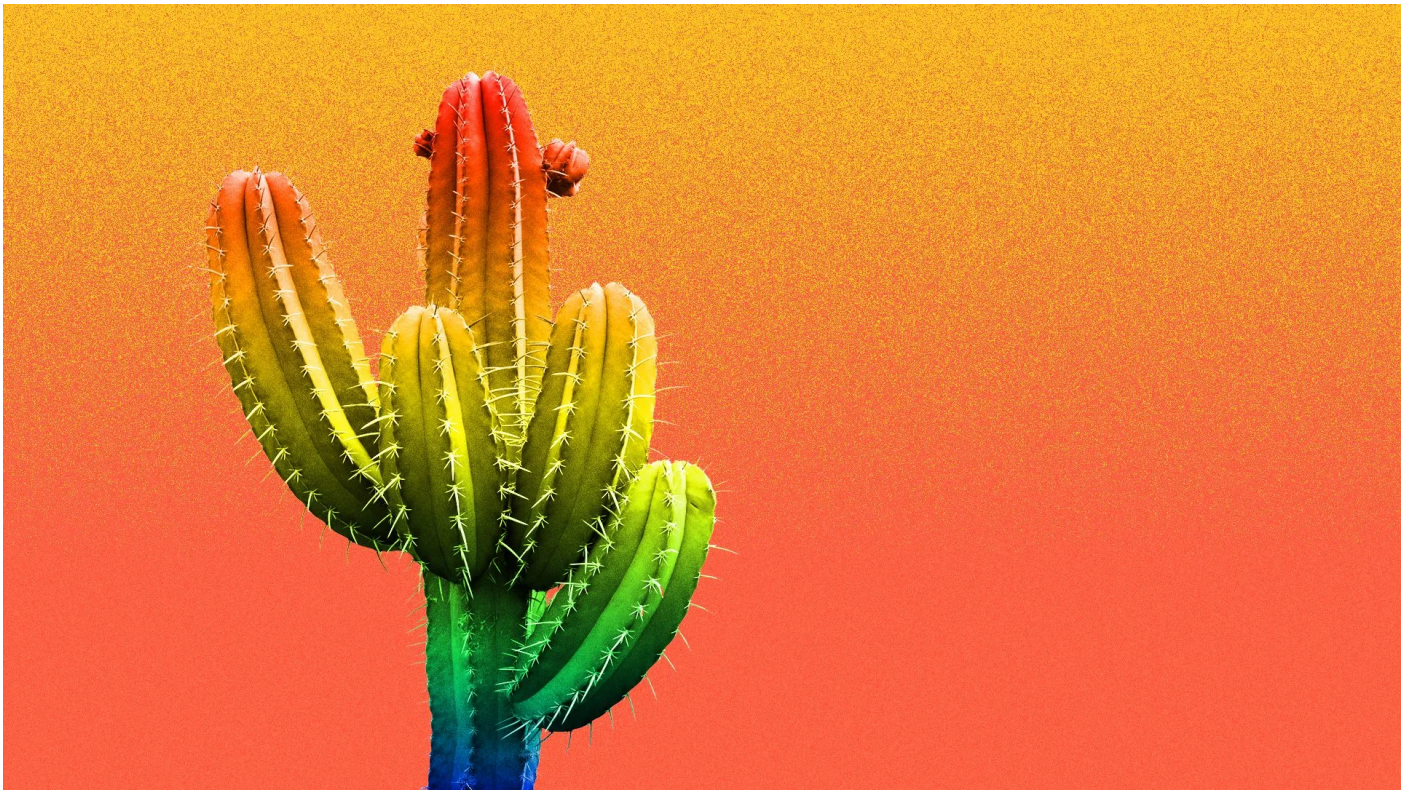


Illustration: Maura Losch/Axios

**State of play:** Phoenix Pride earlier this week announced the date and lineups for its annual [festival](#) and [parade](#).

- The first day of the festival will be Saturday, Oct. 21, at Steele-Indian School Park, with Zee Machine opening and Paulina Rubio headlining.

- Day 2, on Oct. 22, will feature singer-songwriter Ashanti as the headliner, with Niki Harris and Donna Donna De Lory opening.
- The festival goes from noon to 9pm each day and will feature performances on seven stages with more than 300 exhibitors, including food, shopping and community resources.

**Meanwhile**, the festival's Fiesta Caliente Latin Stage will spotlight "RuPaul's Drag Race" stars Jessica Wild and Naysha Lopez as headliners.

- Wild and Lopez will also headline the VIP Experience stages.

**1 big parade:** This year's Pride parade will begin at 10am Sunday, Oct. 22, at Thomas Road and Third Street, and will head a mile north to Indian School Road.

**Zoom in:** Though our extreme summer heat pushes the festival and parade into October, there are still plenty of [Pride Month events](#) happening around the Valley.



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# ARIZONA REPUBLIC

TUESDAY, JUNE 27, 2023

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## Pride across the years

Phoenix's first Pride march in 1981 included about 650 people. Ernie Mendoza, one of the marchers in that first event, says it was "awesome." Now, the nonprofit Phoenix Pride draws up to tens of thousands of people to its annual parade and festival. **3A**

Arizona Republic | TUESDAY, JUNE 27, 2023 | 3A

## VALLEY&STATE

# Pride's activism, celebrations in Valley grew from small start

**Jose R. Gonzalez**

Arizona Republic  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Ernie Mendoza recalled June 27, 1981, not being as hot a summer day as what the Valley is now used to.

On that Saturday, Mendoza was a spectator of the grassroots Phoenix Gay and Lesbian Pride March. At 23 years old, he had not come out as gay yet. But something compelled him to join the crowd of about 100 people walking to the Arizona state Capitol.

"I thought this was awesome. Before I knew it, I was walking in it. I just didn't even think about it. I just got into the march," Mendoza, now 65, said. The

march "brought out the pride in me to be who the hell I am."

The march — Phoenix's first Pride event — eventually included about 650 demonstrators, The Arizona Republic reported at the time. Now, the nonprofit Phoenix Pride draws up to tens of thousands to its annual parade and festival.

Drawing from The Republic's archives, interviews with Mendoza and Phoenix Pride representatives, along with the organization's records, here is a look at the history of Pride's activism and celebrations in the Valley.

### 1969 uprising originated Pride

Though Phoenix Pride now holds its

main events in the fall, Pride month has been federally recognized throughout June since 1999.

Many demonstrations, like Phoenix's 1981 march to the state Capitol, were organized to commemorate the three-day Stonewall riots in New York. Patrons at the Stonewall Inn clashed with the New York Police Department during a violent June 28, 1969, raid on Stonewall Inn, a gay bar. Stonewall then propelled the gay rights movement.

Pride Month also coincides with United States Supreme Court decisions affecting LGBTQ+ rights — the

**See PRIDE, Page 10A**

# Pride

Continued from Page 3A

decriminalization of same-sex sexual relations in June 2003 and the protection of same-sex marriage in June 2015.

## Pride in Phoenix pushed back on anti-LGBTQ+ legislation

Mendoza said the 1981 Pride march protested state legislators trying to close the only meeting places available to LGBTQ+ Arizonans — a few gay bars in operation and adult bookstores.

“There was no outlet, so when you have to hide, you find whatever comfort zone you can,” Mendoza said of the importance of these establishments.

In the early 1980s, same-sex sexual relations were criminal in Arizona and punishable by up to 30 days in jail or a \$500 fine.

As such, the marchers began hitting the pavement at Patriots Square Park. Led by a banner reading “We are here,” their destination was the state Capitol. Mendoza said demonstrators were “tired of being ignored.”

Police said 3,000 supporters who did not march were on Capitol grounds that day, according to Mendoza. The media was instructed by organizers to not photograph the spectators as there were fears they would be recognized and lose their jobs, Mendoza said.

Phoenix Pride spokesperson Jeremy Helfgot called the 1981 march “that very first moment of visibility” in Arizona.

LGBTQ+ residents would come to embrace the festival’s openness, draw-

ing more than 10,000 attendees in 1993 with 87 commercial and educational booths.

The two-day Pride festival “is a ‘safe zone’ for us one weekend out of the year,” college student Skip Schrader was quoted as saying in a June 5, 1994, article in *The Republic*. Some attendees donned “leather-studded gear” and others were in drag, the article said.

A 1998 article about the festival in *The Republic* mentioned same-sex couples kissing under mesquite trees as families with children passed by.

## Events’ time-of-year and city changes

Pride organizers in 1990 formed a committee to oversee a booth and entertainment festival that debuted at El Lienzo Charro Rodeo Grounds in south Phoenix.

Mendoza had immersed himself in Phoenix’s Pride marches and rallies, joining the committee in 1991, the same year the festival moved to Kiwanis Park in Tempe. In the subsequent six years, Pride festivalgoers would converge at Tempe’s Diablo Stadium.

Sometime in the early to mid-1990s, Mendoza won the festival’s first major sponsorship through Budweiser, which helped generate much-needed revenue.

The City of Tempe was consistently welcoming of the Pride festival, Mendoza said.

The city’s inclusiveness became more apparent when voters in 1994 elected Neil Giuliano, one of the country’s first openly gay mayors. The city waived \$1,500 in stadium rental fees for the 1997 festival’s organizers in the face

of critics, including a local Christian fundamentalist group, according to reporting by *The Republic*.

But since Tempe lacked a centralized location for the region’s residents, Margaret T. Hance Park in Phoenix was selected in 1998 as the festival’s new setting.

“(Tempe officials) really wanted us there. They were all sad that we moved to Phoenix... (but) we couldn’t bring in a crowd,” said Mendoza, who in 1996 became the committee’s first Latino president.

Sweltering summers also hampered Pride festival attendance.

“We had lost money several times because the heat was just unbearable,” Mendoza said.

The Pride festival’s date was moved to April in 1998 and coincided with a parade that had been started by the committee just the year before. More than 12,000 people were expected to show up at the festival, according to *The Republic*’s reporting at the time.

## Festival, parade find new setting, new season

Mendoza stepped down as committee president in 2001 before Steele Indian School Park became the festival’s home in 2003.

After the pandemic suspended Phoenix’s two principal Pride events in 2020, the festival and parade took place the following year in early November. This was the first time either event happened in the fall. And in 2022, Phoenix’s Pride festival and parade fell on a mid-October weekend.

October is the anticipated long-term

month for Phoenix Pride festivities, said Helfgot, the organization’s spokesperson. According to Helfgot, an excess of 50,000 and 10,000 people make it annually to the festival and parade, respectively.

Phoenix Pride has provided the Valley’s LGBTQ+ residents with more than \$1 million in community grants and individual scholarships, according to Helfgot.

LGBTQ+ performers like RuPaul, Aaron Carter, actress Heather Matarazzo and actor Wilson Cruz have made their way to Phoenix’s Pride celebrations as performers or keynote speakers. Musicians popular with LGBTQ+ audiences, including the B-52s, Belinda Carlisle, Jennifer Holliday, Sheena Easton, Maribel Guardia and Ninel Conde, have taken the stage during Phoenix Pride events.

Phoenix Pride’s grand marshals have included Phoenix Mercury center Brittney Griner in 2014 and “Wonder Woman” TV series star Lynda Carter in 2011.

Mendoza said Pride events in Phoenix have allowed the LGBTQ+ community to not only be seen, as the 1981 march sought to do, but it also empowers the community members to see themselves.

While gay bars endured bigotry, Mendoza added that Pride is transformative to LGBTQ+ identity.

“You see people at bars, OK. You’re in the dark. You don’t get to know a whole lot of people. But when you see people in the light, it changes everything. It changed a lot for me,” Mendoza said.

Reach breaking news reporter Jose R. Gonzalez at [jose.gonzalez@gannett.com](mailto:jose.gonzalez@gannett.com) or on Twitter @jrgztx.

# 10 years later: Looking back at the passing of anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination laws in Phoenix

It was on Feb. 26, 2013, that the Phoenix City Council approved anti-discrimination protections for LGBTQ+ people



Photo by: KNXV



By: [Nick Ciletti](#)

*Posted at 5:00 AM, Jun 19, 2023 and last updated 6:56 AM, Jun 19, 2023*

PHOENIX — For nearly the past 100 years, the Orpheum Theatre in downtown Phoenix has hosted many historic acts - but it's also been the setting of historic events, like one that happened a decade ago.

It was on Feb. 26, 2013, that the Phoenix City Council voted 5-3 to approve adding anti-discrimination protections for the LGBTQ+ community. The meeting was moved to the Orpheum as the city anticipated large crowds.

Hundreds showed up to make sure their voices were heard and to bear witness to what turned out to be a historic evening — and a turning point for the city when it came to the LGBTQ+ community.

Recently, ABC15 sat down with Brendan Mahoney, who at the time was an advisor to former Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton, and is seen by many as one of the pioneers of the effort to get this passed.

"I can't tell you how many calls I had received over the years as a lawyer from people who had been fired from their jobs for being gay," says Mahoney, who is an attorney by training.

The ordinance, which was passed in 2013, is part of Chapter 18 of the Phoenix City Code, and makes it illegal to discriminate against someone when it comes to things like employment, housing, or any public accommodation, simply because that individual identifies as part of the LGBTQ+ community.

Getting the ordinance passed wasn't easy. Since the 1990s, organizers had tried but were met with roadblocks from many city leaders.

But in early 2013, the tide had started to turn. It took several months and multiple drafts of the ordinance, but in February, city leaders decided to put it up for a formal vote. They moved the meeting to the Orpheum Theatre to accommodate the hundreds of people who would turn up for more than four hours of public comment.

"As it went on, it became increasingly raucous, a lot of ugly stuff was said," Mahoney said. "Deviants. Perverts. Child molesters. That kind of stuff. It's pretty hard to have people accuse you of that."

Supporters argued the city needed to catch up with the times, but some opponents felt the ordinance was too broad and would lead to men using women's restrooms.

The conservative-leaning Center for Arizona Policy claimed at the time, "In other cities across the country with similar laws, the Bathroom Bill has forced businesses to allow a man dressed as a woman into their women's restroom."

It was something Mahoney and his team tried to push back on.

"They focused on that because it was the most inflammatory thing. Let's conjure up the worst possible scenario and scare everyone."

But despite any opposition, it passed, changing Phoenix's history forever.

"That feeling of euphoria - like oh my God! We just broke down a barrier, that's how it felt," says Mahoney.

Mahoney adds that part of the legacy of the ordinance is that it's already helped cut down on discrimination in the city. Still, he acknowledges that the work isn't finished yet.

"There are still a lot of people who simply don't understand. And so there is more work to do."

**Where does the state as a whole and other cities stand?**



Currently, there is no statewide law on the books that include all the protections the Phoenix ordinance has. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled recently that members of the LGBTQ+ community are covered under federal discrimination protections, but the fear is that if those cases get overturned, the protections would go away in states like Arizona that haven't adopted laws of its own.

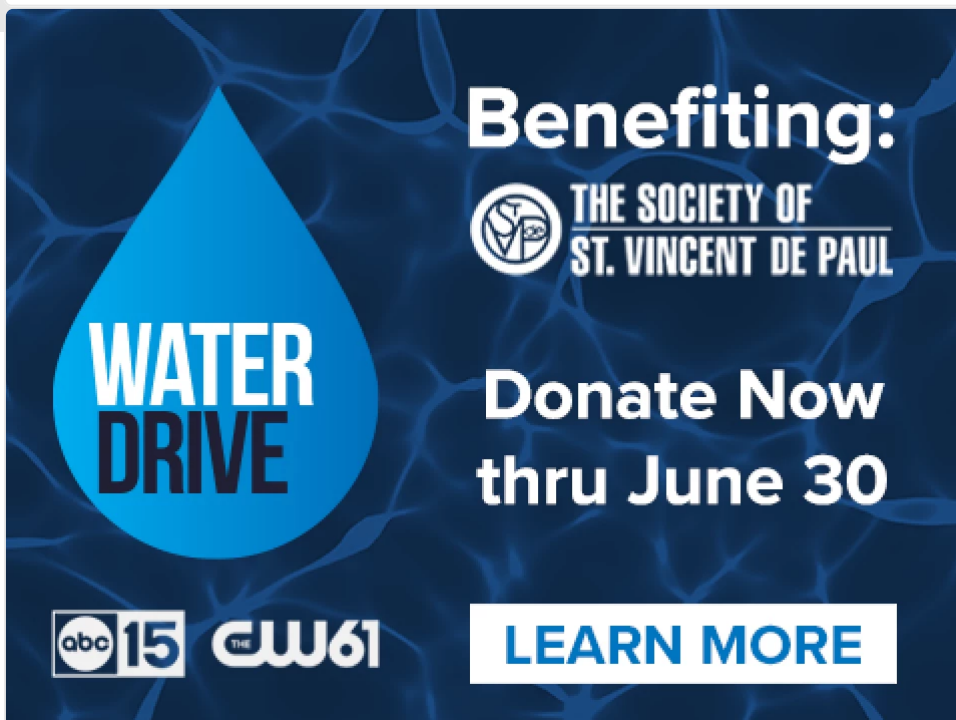
Each year, the Human Rights Campaign, a group whose mission it is to end discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community, ranks cities across the country in something called, "The Municipality Equality Report."


In 2022, three Arizona cities - Phoenix, Scottsdale, and Tempe - received a perfect score. To see where other cities in Arizona ranked, [click here](#).

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