LGBTQ+ rights are lacking in the United States
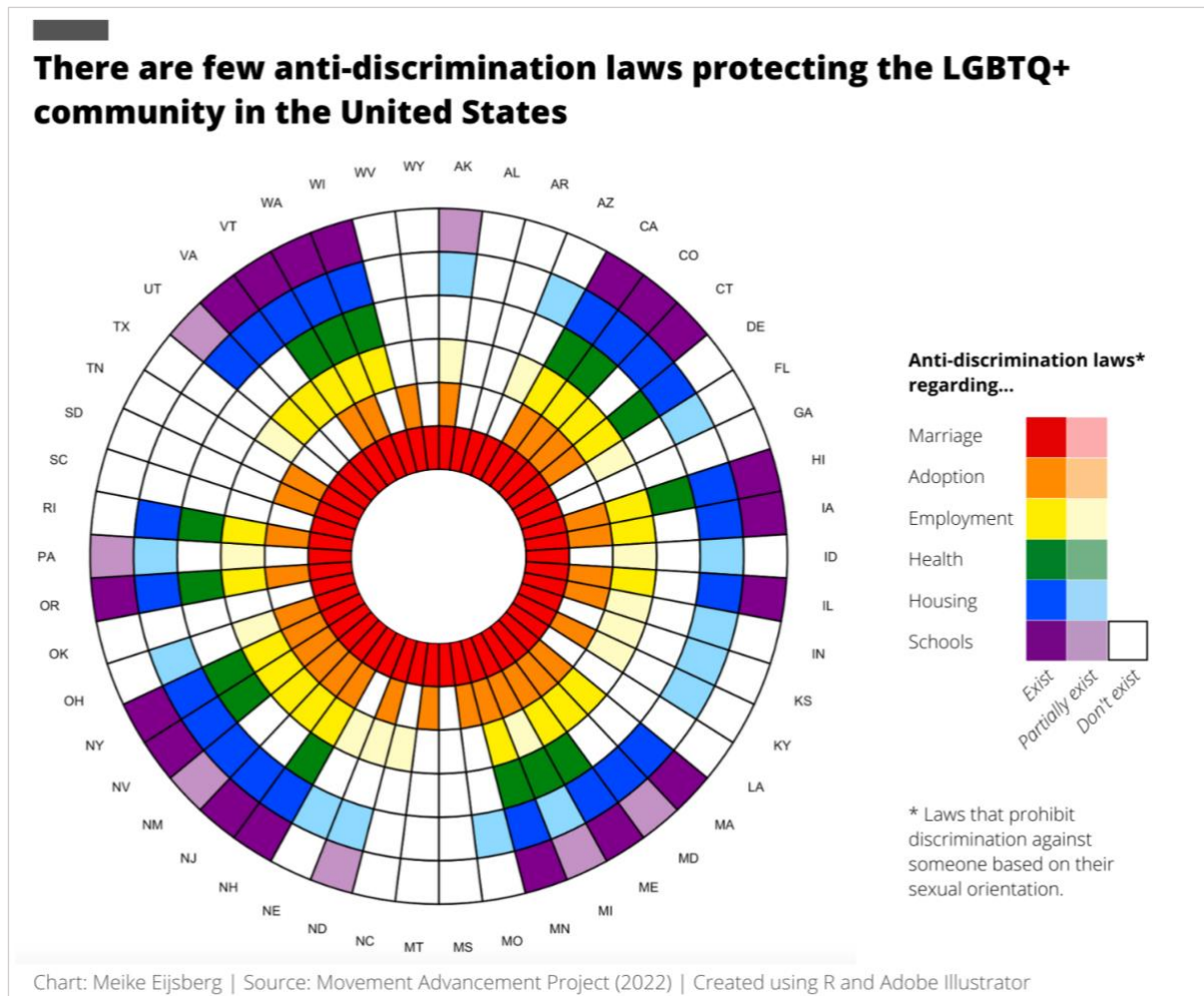
LGBTQ+ rights in the United States are facing more and more legal setbacks.

There are few anti-discrimination laws protecting the LGBTQ+ community in the United States

Chart: Meike Eijsberg | Source: Movement Advancement Project (2022) | Created using R and Adobe Illustrator

The Florida Senate recently passed the 'Parental Rights in Education' bill, which seeks to ban discussion of gender and sexuality issues with younger students in school. Dubbed by critics as the 'Don't Say Gay' bill, it's another nail in the coffin for LGBTQ+ rights in the US.

The White House called it cruel, with White House press secretary Jen Psaki saying: "It is certainly something that is not helping, you know, young people who are members of the LGBTQ+ community who are already vulnerable, already being bullied."

Although the 'Don't Say Gay' bill doesn't directly permit discrimination, it does limit the rights of the LGBTQ+ community. And their rights in the US are limited as it is.

Florida doesn't have any anti-discrimination laws to protect the LGBTQ+ community in schools – and neither do 24 other states. Seven states do offer partial protection, but from a legal perspective it's often unclear to what extent.

Due to the infamous 2016 Supreme Court ruling, LGBTQ+ marriage is legal in all 50 states. But should a married queer couple want to adopt a child, they can still face discrimination in 19 states. Health is an even bigger issue, with only 15 states offering anti-discrimination laws as protection. When it comes to employment or housing – basic human rights – there is partial legal protection against discrimination regarding the former in 14 states and regarding the latter in 13 states.

If you're part of the LGBTQ+ community, don't go to the South of the United States

Coastal states in the East and West, usually Democratic, have more LGBTQ+ anti-discrimination laws (i.e. prohibiting discrimination against someone based on their sexual orientation) than Southern states, usually Republican.

Anti-discrimination laws exist   Anti-discrimination laws partially exist   Anti-discrimination laws don't exist

Marriage   Adoption   Employment

Health   Housing   Schools

Chart: Meike Eijsberg | Source: Movement Advancement Project (2022) | Created using R and Adobe Illustrator

Most anti-discrimination laws are implemented in the states on the East-and West coast, the so-called 'blue states' (Democratic). Protection is scarce or non-existent in the southern 'red states' (Republican).

What's worse, is that the 'Don't Say Gay' bill, is only one of more than 150 anti-LGBTQ+ bills introduced in 2022 according to CNN. Soon after it was passed in Florida, southern states like Georgia, Tennessee and Oklahoma introduced very similar legislation.