



Annisquam Harbor Light Station,
Massachusetts

2025 State LGBTQ+ Business Climate Index



Purpose

Multinational companies face operational and reputational risks when they do business in places where the legal and/or social atmosphere makes it difficult for LGBTQ+ people to live openly. Discrimination against LGBTQ+ people creates serious challenges for talent mobility, retention, and development – and creates brand risk. Out Leadership's State LGBTQ+ Business Climate Index and CEO Business Briefs help C-Suite leaders understand and respond to these risks and opportunities. They also inform and empower corporate executives to engage in conversations with economic development officials and other local stakeholders about why discrimination against LGBTQ+ people negatively impacts their ability to do business.

How to use the State LGBTQ+ Business Climate Index

As a business leader, you have the opportunity to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ people wherever you work – both within your company and in the states where you do business. The State LGBTQ+ Business Climate Index and CEO Briefs provide valuable information to inform your conversations with:

Staff: Ensure that staff at your company are aware of the laws and attitudes impacting LGBTQ+ people where they work and that they've adopted the appropriate internal policies, including legal support, HR training, and safety protocols for their location.

Government Leaders: In meetings with government leaders, particularly those focused on economic development, we encourage you to bring that state's performance on the State Business Climate Index, as well as the details shared in the CEO Briefs, in an appropriate way. As employers in a state, you are an economic engine and driver – elected leaders listen. We hope that these tools will help you explain how LGBTQ+ inclusive policies are part of a company's best practices and acknowledged as intrinsic to global standards.

Business Partners: In conversations with business partners and vendors, when appropriate, ask them what they're doing to address LGBTQ+ inclusion, and then explain why inclusion positively impacts your ability to conduct business.

Out Leadership Members

Out Leadership is the world's premier global platform for businesses to drive LGBTQ+ equality. We work closely with the world's leading companies to develop extraordinary talent, produce cutting-edge research, advance powerful advocacy, and improve business outcomes.

Thank you to our members as of June 1, 2025:

Member Investors



Member Companies



Join our global movement. If your company is not a member, email info@outleadership.com.



Introduction

Dear Leaders,

Today I'm proud to present Out Leadership's 7th annual State LGBTQ+ Business Climate Index. This is one of our most important research publications of the year—a detailed ranking of all 50 U.S. states on how hospitable they are to LGBTQ+ people—especially in the context of business, talent retention, and workplace inclusion.

The Index ranks all 50 states across five key areas that affect the ability to hire, retain, and protect talent: legal protections, healthcare access, workplace climate, political attitudes, and family support.

We also spotlight the real-world consequences—from GDP growth to convention losses that clearly show inclusive states win.

This year, while there are pockets of progress, unfortunately overall the news is not good.

For the third year in a row, we're seeing a disturbing trend: LGBTQ+ equality is declining across the United States. The average score across all 50 states dropped again in 2025—driven by more than 500 anti-LGBTQ+ bills, most targeting the transgender and nonbinary community, and a growing political divide that's turning inclusion into a battleground.

As someone who's worked for decades to help the world's most influential companies integrate LGBTQ+ equality into their core business strategy, I find this trend deeply troubling—for our values and certainly for business.

When more than 22% of Gen Z identifies as LGBTQ+ and 70% of LGBTQ+ employees believe being out in the workplace has had a positive impact on their career,* companies that ignore this reality risk losing a talented future workforce and profits.

Still there are bright spots in the report! States like Kentucky and Michigan made big gains thanks to bold leadership from their governors. Massachusetts and New York now tie for the #1 spot, proof that policy, leadership, and culture can work together.

We're proud that so many of our member companies are helping lead that charge.

Special thanks to our partners Gill Foundation, Movement Advancement Project (MAP), Williams Institute, FCB, Ropes & Gray, America Competes, and Dr. Rachel Golden (see page 26 for details).

I invite you to read the full report and use it in your boardrooms, executive teams, and strategy sessions. You can download it here:

www.outleadership.com/2025index

Thank you for continuing to lead with integrity and heart.



With gratitude,

Todd G. Sears
Founder and CEO
Out Leadership



**Source: Gallup*

Executive Summary

Out Leadership's 2025 State LGBTQ+ Business Climate Index A Divided Nation—A Call to Corporate Action

Out Leadership's **7th annual State LGBTQ+ Business Climate Index** arrives at a critical moment for equality and the economy. Designed as a **go-to resource** for executives, board members, policymakers, and investors, the Index ranks all 50 U.S. states across five categories: Legal and Nondiscrimination Protections, Youth and Family Support, Political and Religious Attitudes, Health Access and Safety, and Work Environment and Employment.

This year's findings paint an overall discouraging picture: **For the third year in a row, LGBTQ+ equality is declining across the country.**

The national average score **fell slightly from 62.77 to 62.62**. While this drop may seem small, it indicates a deeper regression. Political polarization is widening, and following the 2024 elections, a new wave of anti-LGBTQ+ laws is sweeping the nation.

What's Driving the Decline?

- More conservative leadership following the 2024 elections
- More than 500 anti-LGBTQ+ bills introduced in 48 states this year alone
- "Don't Say Gay" laws expanded in states like Florida, Ohio, and Texas
- 25+ states now ban gender-affirming healthcare for minors
- New laws in Kansas and Montana block trans people from updating IDs
- Religious exemption laws allow open discrimination in several states

Notable State Shifts

- **Top Performers:** Massachusetts and New York (tied for #1 at 93.67), Connecticut and New Jersey close behind
- **Most Improved:** Kentucky (+5) and Michigan (+4), thanks to pro-equality leadership from the governors
- **Biggest Drops:** Ohio (-7), Florida (-3), Utah (-3)
- **Bottom States:** Arkansas (#50 for third year), South Carolina, Louisiana, South Dakota, Alabama

Why This Matters to Business

This is about values—and about risk. Companies operating in low-ranking states face real consequences from convention losses to employee flight.

Meanwhile, inclusive states enjoy stronger growth and greater talent retention. The next generation of workers is watching; 76% avoid jobs in anti-equality states. Consumers, too—75% say they boycott brands that don't align with their values.

The Bottom Line

Neutrality is no longer an option.

Businesses must lead.

Use the Index as your guide. Relocate investments to inclusive states. Speak out against discrimination. Protect your people. Align your values with your strategy—and win the future.

“This isn’t activism—it’s risk management.”

—Todd Sears, Founder & CEO,
Out Leadership

Download the full 2025 Index
accompanying State Briefs
www.outleadership.com/2025index



Rationale & Methodology

Out Leadership's Business Climate Index for the 50 United States is an assessment of states' performance on LGBTQ+ inclusion. It measures the impact government policies and prevalent attitudes have on LGBTQ+ people residing in each state, quantifying the economic imperatives for inclusion and the costs of discrimination. It equips business leaders and policymakers with a clear view of the most impactful steps they can take to make their states more hospitable to forward-thinking, innovative, inclusive businesses.

It is a multidimensional Index based on a broad array of markers of policies, attitudes, and measurements relating to LGBTQ+ inclusion. These markers are carefully chosen to accurately reflect the experiences of LGBTQ+ people in each state.

Societal marginalization of LGBTQ+ people, which can often be subtle and hard to measure, has real and serious economic costs. Major legislative efforts to extend further legal discrimination, such as the Religious Freedom Restoration (RFRA) law Mike Pence signed in Indiana in 2016, and North Carolina's passage of the HB2 "Bathroom Bill," damaged those states' reputations for being business-friendly and harmed tourism, resulting in significant economic losses. We see this also in the current attack on trans youth in over 100 bills proposed in 35 state legislations, as well as "Don't Say Gay" bills being signed into law in Florida and several other states.

But discrimination doesn't need to be headline news to be harmful, or to create real economic hardship for LGBTQ+ people. The Out Leadership State LGBTQ+ Business Climate Index combines verifiable data on LGBTQ+ people's lived experiences with economic data to help business leaders and policymakers understand the true cost of policies that create minority stress.

Research demonstrates that companies where LGBTQ+ people are supported enjoy increased profitability, stock prices, and employee productivity. Our Index suggests that a similar relationship exists on a state policy level and that states that aim to make LGBTQ+ people more welcome legally and culturally experience significant rewards for doing so, particularly in terms of residents' well-being and productivity.

Data Sources & Standards

In creating this Index, we required that data inputs be independently verifiable, as recent as possible, and available for each state. We also required that data be based on a sufficient sample for statistical analysis.

Data partners included The Movement Advancement Project (MAP), The United States Transgender Survey (USTS), and The Williams Institute. Other data not used in the Index were sourced from available online datasets tracking statewide economic data markers such as those from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and a report published by the United States Treasury.

All data used in the scale are published online. USTS data are from the largest national survey of transgender individuals in the United States (2015). MAP data reflect current policies and practices as of April 15, 2025. Williams Institute data are from no earlier than 2017. Bureau of Labor Statistics data are from May 2018.

The Index was built so that the data can be updated as laws and attitudes measurably change. Please note that given the rapid nature of public policy, some analysis in this report and its accompanying CEO State Briefs may include legislative updates that occurred after April 15, 2025, and are not reflected in the scores provided by MAP at that time.



Measures

The Index consists of 5 sections: Legal and Nondiscrimination Protections, Youth and Family Support, Political and Religious Attitudes, Health Access and Safety, and Work Environment and Employment. Each section totaled 20 points and accounted for 1/5 of the Index total.



Legal and Nondiscrimination Protections

The Legal and Nondiscrimination Protections section includes two subsections:

The Personal Legal Scale assesses the state's laws directly impacting LGBTQ+ individuals. This scale includes: How difficult is it for transgender people to change their gender markers on birth certificates and driver's licenses? The process to change your birth certificate. The protections for individuals in housing, the workplace, public spaces, foster care, and more.

Two Nondiscrimination Protections Scales assess the extent to which LGBTQ+ people are protected under state law. One evaluates nondiscrimination laws related to employment (including any protections specific to state employees). The other evaluates any nondiscrimination laws related to housing, public accommodations, credit and lending, and includes an assessment of whether state law preempts cities from passing nondiscrimination laws – a significant, growing, troubling trend.



Youth and Family Support

The Youth and Family Support section contains three subsections:

The *Family Support Scale* measures how supportive the state is of LGBTQ+ people who are in or wish to start families. Elements of this scale include: the percentage of LGBTQ+ families raising children, and whether state family leave laws cover same-gender couples and allow workers to care for the children they are raising. In addition, it measures whether states allow second-parent adoption, if they provide adoption and foster care non-discrimination protections, and if state law allows recognition for parents using assisted reproduction.

The *Children and Youth Scale* assesses the resources available to LGBTQ+ children and youth in the state. It includes whether the state has non-discrimination laws and policies for LGBTQ+ students, whether anti-bullying laws and policies cover LGBTQ+ students, whether the state has any laws preventing schools or school districts from actively protecting LGBTQ+ students through non-discrimination or anti-bullying policies, whether the state has bans on healthcare for trans youth, and whether the state has enacted a ban on trans athletes participating on teams of their gender.

The *Targeted Laws* section evaluates states on whether they ban discussion of same-gender marriage in schools, and whether they ban conversion therapy for minors.



Political and Religious Attitudes

The Political and Religious Attitudes section contains two subsections, the Religious Protections Scale and the State Leadership Scores. Taken together, these scales assess the tone of the state's conversation around LGBTQ+ rights.

The *Religious Protections Scale* assesses the extent and impacts of a state's constitutional or statutory religious exemption laws, and whether state law provides for targeted religious exemption from laws governing child welfare services, private wedding services, and the provision of medical care. Finally, the scale assesses whether state law allows for state and local officials to claim a religious exemption in the provision of marriage licenses.

The *State Leadership Scores* are Out Leadership's unique measures evaluating the state's most senior elected officials – the Governor and the two U.S. Senators – and assessing how they've represented their views of LGBTQ+ people in speeches and in their political platforms, and in terms of how they've acted with regard to laws impacting LGBTQ+ equality.



Health Access and Safety

The Health Access and Safety section contains two subsections:

The *Health Scale* assesses LGBTQ+ people's access to insurance and medical care in each state, giving particular emphasis to the most economically precarious and vulnerable members of the community. It considers whether private insurance is covered by state non-discrimination protections, whether transgender care is covered by Medicaid, and whether health insurance providers are banned from excluding coverage for transgender-specific care. It also assesses whether state employees receive transgender-inclusive health benefits.

The *Safety Scale* is based on two significant laws protecting or criminalizing behaviors affecting LGBTQ+ people. It asks whether the state protects LGBTQ+ people in its hate crime laws. It also assesses whether the state criminalizes exposure to or transmission of HIV.



Work Environment and Employment

The Work Environment and Employment section contains two subsections:

The *Work Environment Scale* assesses transgender individuals' experiences at work, including incidences of verbal harassment, sexual assault, and other mistreatment (such as being forced to use a non-gender-matching restroom, being told to present in the wrong gender in order to keep a job, having someone at work share without consent private information about their gender).

The *Employment Scale* is based on assessments of LGBTQ+ employment in the state. This scale includes the percentage of LGBTQ+ people making less than \$24,000 annually (approximately the current Federal poverty line), and the differences in unemployment rates and food insecurity between LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ identified individuals.



Scoring

Our scoring process is transparent and meaningful. We gave positive scores to policies that provided protections or equal treatment for LGBTQ+ individuals; we gave negative scores to legislation or policy marginalizing or discriminating against LGBTQ+ people, as well as to instances where protections excluded LGBTQ+ people. We also gave credit to states for not enacting or approving discriminatory laws and regulations. For all components of the scale, 5 represented the top score, 1 represented the low score. The maximum score a state could receive is 100 points and the minimum score is 25.

Note: Starting in 2025, the scoring rubrics for birth certificates, driver's licenses, and "Don't Say LGBTQ+" laws were updated to reflect the current policy environment. These changes may result in minor score adjustments compared to previous editions of the State LGBTQ+ Business Climate Index. For more information, visit lgbtmap.org or contact info@outleadership.com.

State Index Scores

State	2024 Total	2025 Total	Legal and Nondiscrimination Protections				Youth and Family Support			
			Change Birth Certificate	Change Driver's License	Emp Non- discrimination	Other Non- discrimination	Family Support	Youth Support	Conversion Therapy Ban	"No promo homo"
Alabama	37.90	39.40	0.25	0.25	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.40	2.00	2.00
Alaska	58.00	56.00	4.00	4.00	4.50	2.50	1.00	3.00	2.00	5.00
Arizona	59.88	61.05	0.50	2.00	4.50	3.50	2.00	1.75	2.00	5.00
Arkansas	27.00	29.50	0.25	0.25	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.20	2.00	2.00
California	86.67	86.67	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.67	5.00	5.00	5.00
Colorado	88.67	87.67	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.67	5.00	5.00	5.00
Connecticut	93.27	92.27	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.67	5.00	5.00	5.00
Delaware	72.43	71.43	4.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	2.83	3.60	5.00	5.00
Florida	45.20	42.20	0.00	0.00	4.50	3.50	1.00	1.40	2.00	2.00
Georgia	52.40	53.50	0.25	0.25	1.00	2.00	1.00	2.40	2.00	5.00
Hawaii	82.67	81.27	4.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	2.17	4.60	5.00	5.00
Idaho	44.07	42.07	5.00	2.00	1.50	2.50	1.67	1.40	2.00	2.00
Illinois	88.47	88.47	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.67	5.00	5.00	5.00
Indiana	42.67	42.67	0.00	3.00	3.50	2.50	2.17	1.40	1.00	2.00
Iowa	49.60	47.45	0.00	0.25	3.00	4.00	2.00	2.60	2.00	2.00
Kansas	52.30	51.80	0.00	0.00	4.50	3.50	1.00	1.40	2.00	5.00
Kentucky	39.50	43.25	0.50	0.25	4.50	3.00	2.00	1.40	2.00	2.00
Louisiana	31.50	33.00	0.25	0.25	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.40	2.00	1.00
Maine	88.67	88.67	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.67	5.00	5.00	5.00
Maryland	82.83	84.83	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	2.83	5.00	5.00	5.00
Mass.	92.00	93.67	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.67	5.00	5.00	5.00
Michigan	78.07	82.07	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	2.67	4.20	5.00	5.00
Minnesota	88.33	87.33	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	2.33	5.00	5.00	5.00
Mississippi	35.27	37.27	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.67	1.40	2.00	4.00
Missouri	46.10	43.60	0.25	0.25	2.00	2.50	1.50	0.50	2.00	5.00

State	Political and Religious Attitudes				Health Access and Safety				Work Environment and Employment			
	Governor Rating	Senator 1 Rating	Senator 2 Rating	Religious Exclusions	Health Support	State Employee Coverage	Hate Crimes Protections	HIV Criminalization	Safety at Work	Unemployment Differential	Food Insecurity Differential	Income Over 24k
AL	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	1.50	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	5.00	1.00
AK	1.00	3.00	3.00	5.00	2.00	3.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	1.00	3.00	2.00
AZ	4.00	3.00	5.00	3.80	1.00	3.00	3.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
AR	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.80	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	2.00
CA	4.00	3.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	5.00	4.00
CO	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	5.00
CT	4.00	5.00	5.00	4.60	4.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
DE	3.00	3.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	5.00	2.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	2.00
FL	1.00	2.00	1.00	3.80	1.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
GA	1.00	5.00	5.00	4.60	2.00	2.00	5.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	5.00	3.00
HI	3.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.50	3.00	5.00	5.00	2.00	5.00	1.00	4.00
ID	1.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	1.00	3.00
IL	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.80	5.00	3.00	5.00	5.00	2.00	5.00	3.00	3.00
IN	1.00	1.00	3.00	4.60	1.50	3.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00
IA	1.00	2.00	2.00	4.60	2.00	4.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
KS	5.00	2.00	3.00	3.40	1.00	3.00	3.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	1.00	2.00
KY	5.00	1.00	1.00	4.60	1.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	1.00	1.00
LA	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.60	1.50	1.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.00
ME	5.00	3.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	2.00	3.00	5.00	3.00
MD	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	5.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	5.00
MA	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	3.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
MI	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.20	5.00	3.00	5.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
MN	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	2.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	5.00
MS	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.20	1.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	5.00	1.00
MO	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.60	1.00	3.00	5.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00

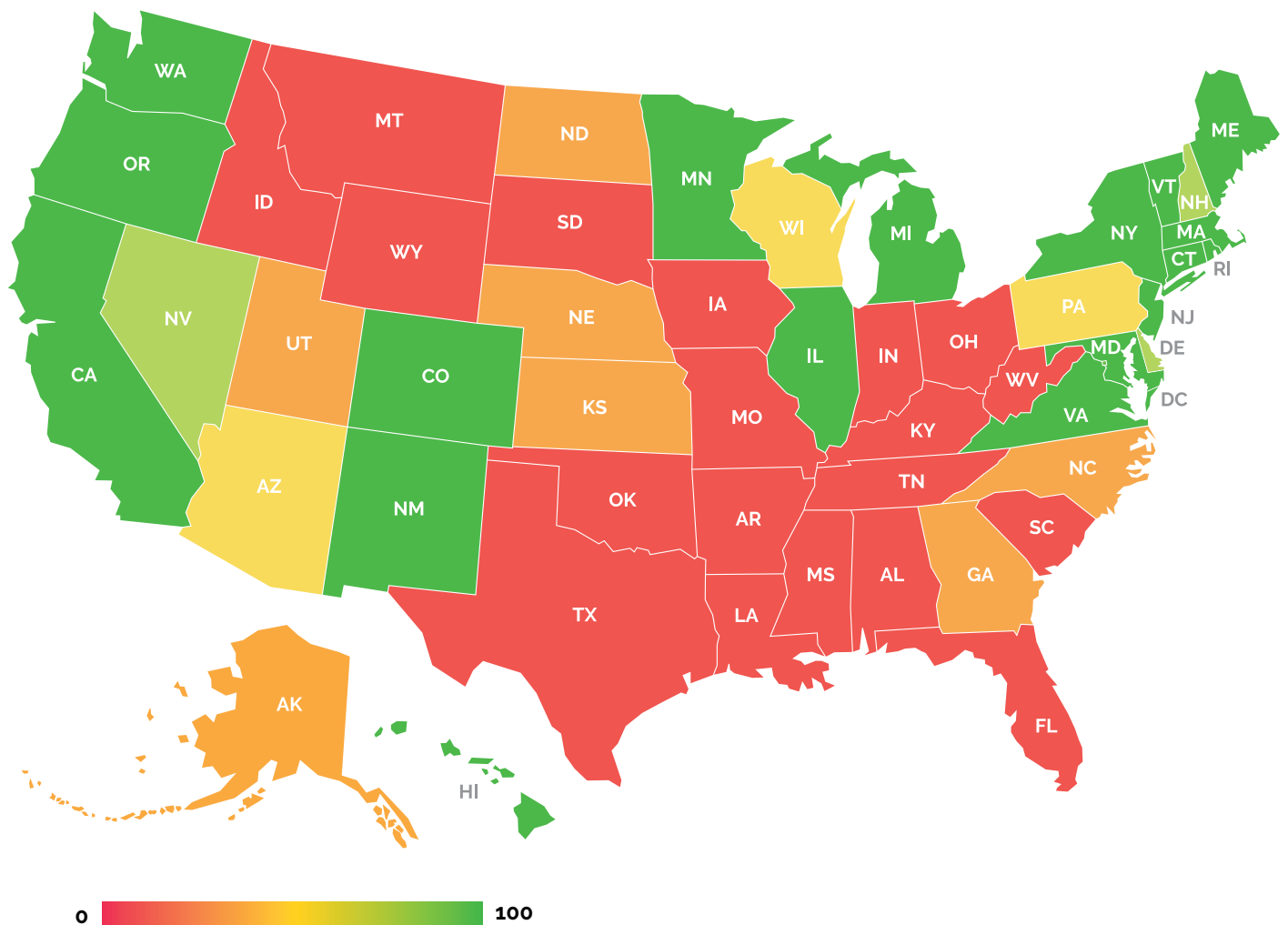
State Index Scores

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			Change Birth Certificate	Change Driver's License	Emp Non-discrimination	Other Non-discrimination	Family Support	Youth Support	Conversion Therapy Ban	"No promo homo"
Montana	43.37	40.62	0.00	0.25	3.00	2.00	2.17	1.40	2.00	5.00
Nebraska	51.90	53.40	0.50	3.00	4.50	3.00	1.00	2.40	2.00	5.00
Nevada	79.67	79.67	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.67	5.00	5.00	5.00
New Hamp.	78.33	76.08	1.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	3.33	3.75	5.00	5.00
New Jersey	90.00	90.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
New Mexico	85.77	86.93	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.33	5.00	5.00	5.00
New York	93.67	93.67	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.67	5.00	5.00	5.00
N. Carolina	52.55	53.05	4.00	4.00	3.50	2.25	2.00	2.20	2.00	2.00
N. Dakota	55.22	56.47	0.25	4.00	4.50	4.25	2.67	2.00	2.00	5.00
Ohio	50.35	42.35	1.00	4.00	4.50	4.25	2.00	1.40	2.00	2.00
Oklahoma	33.37	37.62	0.00	0.25	1.00	2.00	1.67	1.40	2.00	4.00
Oregon	87.00	87.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	3.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Pennsylvania	66.27	66.27	4.00	5.00	4.50	3.50	1.67	4.00	5.00	5.00
Rhode Island	85.70	85.70	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.50	4.60	5.00	5.00
S. Carolina	31.90	32.15	1.00	0.25	1.00	2.00	1.50	1.40	2.00	5.00
S. Dakota	34.80	34.80	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	0.50	2.00	5.00
Tennessee	34.00	35.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.40	2.00	5.00
Texas	44.70	44.70	0.00	0.00	4.50	2.00	1.00	1.40	2.00	4.00
Utah	53.50	52.50	1.00	2.00	5.00	3.00	1.00	2.20	5.00	5.00
Vermont	89.50	89.50	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.50	5.00	5.00	5.00
Virginia	81.67	80.47	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	1.67	4.00	5.00	5.00
Washington	85.83	84.83	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	2.83	5.00	5.00	5.00
West Virginia	49.90	46.90	4.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	1.80	2.00	5.00
Wisconsin	67.47	68.72	0.25	2.00	5.00	3.00	1.67	3.80	2.00	5.00
Wyoming	48.57	45.42	0.25	4.00	1.00	2.00	1.67	1.40	2.00	5.00

State	Political and Religious Attitudes				Health Access and Safety				Work Environment and Employment			
	Governor Rating	Senator 1 Rating	Senator 2 Rating	Religious Exclusions	Health Support	State Employee Coverage	Hate Crimes Protections	HIV Criminalization	Safety at Work	Unemployment Differential	Food Insecurity Differential	Income Over 24k
MT	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.80	3.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	1.00	1.00
NE	1.00	2.00	1.00	5.00	1.00	4.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	4.00
NV	1.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	1.00	5.00	5.00	2.00	3.00	1.00	3.00
NH	1.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	1.00	3.00
NJ	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	3.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	5.00	4.00
NM	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.60	4.00	1.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	5.00	3.00
NY	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	5.00	5.00	4.00
NC	4.00	2.00	3.00	4.60	1.50	3.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.00
ND	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.80	2.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	5.00	5.00	4.00
OH	1.00	3.00	1.00	4.20	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00
OK	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.80	1.50	2.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	1.00	3.00
OR	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	2.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	4.00
PA	4.00	2.00	3.00	4.60	4.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	1.00	3.00	3.00
RI	4.00	5.00	5.00	4.60	4.00	3.00	3.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	5.00	3.00
SC	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	3.00
SD	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.80	1.50	3.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	2.00
TN	1.00	1.00	3.00	2.60	1.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	2.00
TX	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.80	1.00	3.00	3.00	5.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
UT	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.80	1.50	3.00	5.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	3.00	3.00
VT	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
VA	1.00	5.00	5.00	3.80	4.00	3.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	5.00
WA	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	5.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	5.00
WV	1.00	1.00	2.00	4.60	1.50	3.00	1.00	5.00	2.00	1.00	3.00	1.00
WI	5.00	5.00	2.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	5.00	4.00
WY	1.00	3.00	1.00	4.60	1.50	3.00	1.00	5.00	2.00	1.00	3.00	2.00

Heat Map

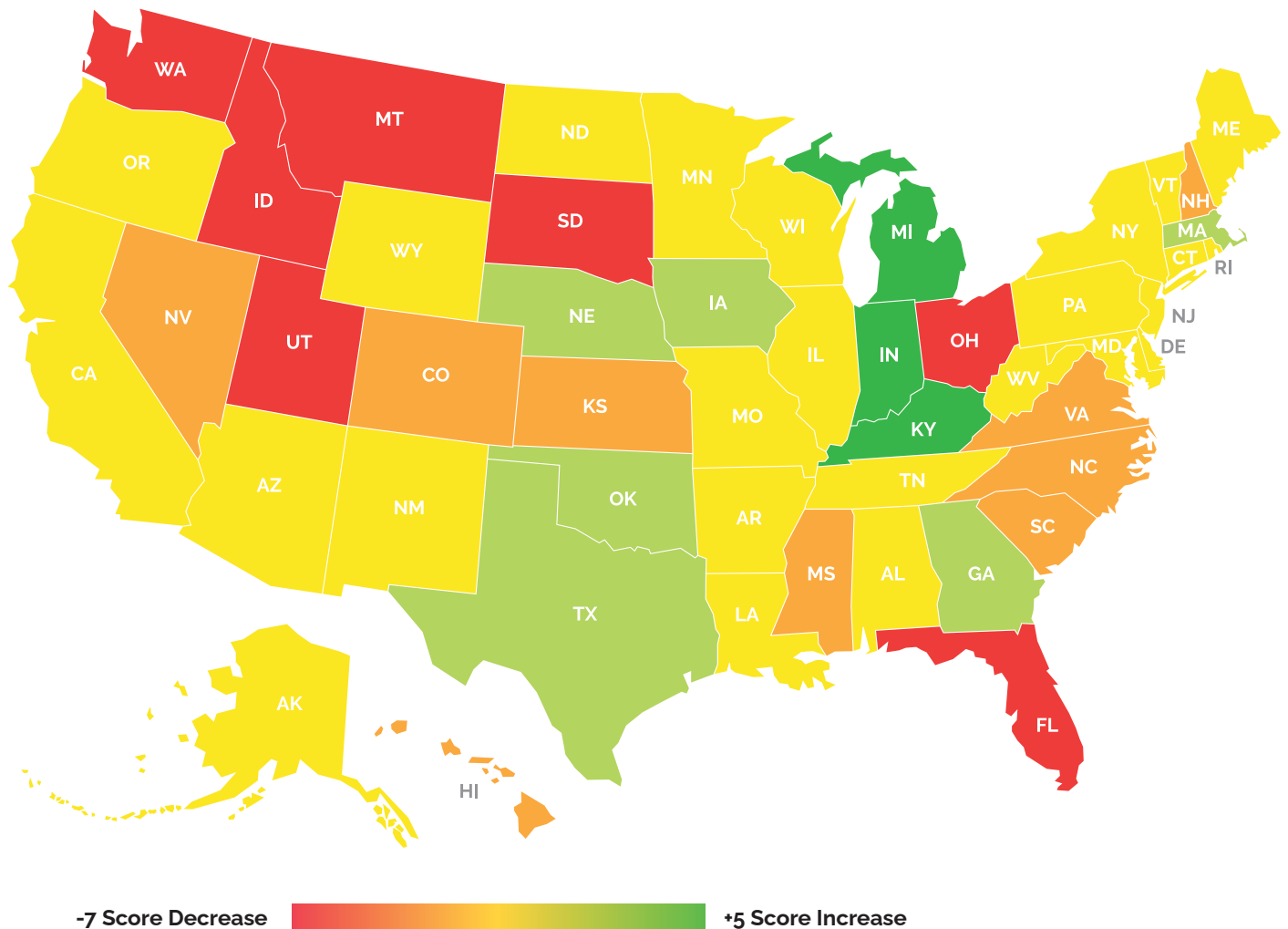
The legal and cultural situation for LGBTQ+ people varies widely across the country. This map, based on each state's total Business Climate Score, illustrates the states where LGBTQ+ people are empowered to participate more fully and openly in the economy, and the states that are lagging.



State Rankings

2025 Rank	State	2024 Score	2025 Score	Score Change
1	Massachusetts	92.00	93.67	1.67
1	New York	93.67	93.67	0.00
3	Connecticut	93.27	92.27	-1.00
4	New Jersey	90.00	90.00	0.00
5	Vermont	89.50	89.50	0.00
6	Maine	88.67	88.67	0.00
7	Illinois	88.47	88.47	0.00
8	Colorado	88.67	87.67	-1.00
9	Minnesota	88.33	87.33	-1.00
10	Oregon	87.00	87.00	0.00
11	New Mexico	85.77	86.93	1.17
12	California	86.67	86.67	0.00
13	Rhode Island	85.70	85.70	0.00
14	Maryland	82.83	84.83	2.00
14	Washington	85.83	84.83	-1.00
16	Michigan	78.07	82.07	4.00
17	Hawaii	82.67	81.27	-1.40
18	Virginia	81.67	80.47	-1.20
19	Nevada	79.67	79.67	0.00
20	New Hampshire	78.33	76.08	-2.25
21	Delaware	72.43	71.43	-1.00
22	Wisconsin	67.47	68.72	1.25
23	Pennsylvania	66.27	66.27	0.00
24	Arizona	59.88	61.05	1.17
25	North Dakota	55.22	56.47	1.25

2025 Rank	State	2024 Score	2025 Score	Score Change
26	Alaska	58.00	56.00	-2.00
27	Georgia	52.40	53.50	1.10
28	Nebraska	51.90	53.40	1.50
29	North Carolina	52.55	53.05	0.50
30	Utah	53.50	52.50	-1.00
31	Kansas	52.30	51.80	-0.50
32	Iowa	49.60	47.45	-2.15
33	West Virginia	49.90	46.90	-3.00
34	Wyoming	48.57	45.42	-3.15
35	Texas	44.70	44.70	0.00
36	Missouri	46.10	43.60	-2.50
37	Kentucky	39.50	43.25	3.75
38	Indiana	42.67	42.67	0.00
39	Ohio	50.35	42.35	-8.00
40	Florida	45.20	42.20	-3.00
41	Idaho	44.07	42.07	-2.00
42	Montana	43.37	40.62	-2.75
43	Alabama	37.90	39.40	1.50
44	Oklahoma	33.37	37.62	4.25
45	Mississippi	35.27	37.27	2.00
46	Tennessee	34.00	35.00	1.00
47	South Dakota	34.80	34.80	0.00
48	Louisiana	31.50	33.00	1.50
49	South Carolina	31.90	32.15	0.25
50	Arkansas	27.00	29.50	2.50



Movement in Score & Rank

For the third year in a row, the average movement in scores was negative. The flood of anti-LGBTQ+, specifically anti-trans, legislation moved more states down in score than in the past 6 years of the Index. We continue to see similar concerning trends: states with high scores continue to defend the rights of all LGBTQ+ individuals, while states with low scores are seeing increased anti-LGBTQ+ policies—and cultural trends are moving in that same direction. Many of the states that did see substantial increases had one consistent factor: a governor who prioritized protections for LGBTQ+ folks and consistently vetoed anti-LGBTQ+ legislation.

All these shifts impact companies' abilities to do the best business, recruit and retain top talent, and put pressure on organizations to take a position on the constant stream of state-level legislation that impacts their employees, clients, and in some cases, products and services.

Note: The 2025 Index shows movement in rank to best reflect Out Leadership's updated methodology. Past Indexes showed movement in score. For more information, see "Scoring" on page 13.

States with the most significant movement in rank:

Score Change Rank	State	Rank 2024	Rank 2025	Rank Change	Score Change Rank	State	Rank 2024	Rank 2025	Rank Change
1	Kentucky	42	37	+5	26	Oregon	10	10	0
2	Michigan	20	16	+4	27	Pennsylvania	23	23	0
3	Indiana	41	38	+3	28	Tennessee	46	46	0
4	Nebraska	31	28	+3	29	Vermont	5	5	0
5	Oklahoma	47	44	+3	30	Wisconsin	22	22	0
6	Texas	38	35	+3	31	West Virginia	33	33	0
7	Georgia	29	27	+2	32	Alaska	25	26	-1
8	Iowa	34	32	+2	33	California	11	12	-1
9	Massachusetts	3	1	+2	34	Connecticut	2	3	-1
10	New Mexico	13	11	+2	35	Hawaii	16	17	-1
11	Illinois	8	7	+1	36	Kansas	30	31	-1
12	Louisiana	49	48	+1	37	Mississippi	44	45	-1
13	Maryland	15	14	+1	38	North Carolina	28	29	-1
14	Maine	7	6	+1	39	New Hampshire	19	20	-1
15	North Dakota	26	25	+1	40	Nevada	18	19	-1
16	Rhode Island	14	13	+1	41	South Carolina	48	49	-1
17	Wyoming	35	34	+1	42	Virginia	17	18	-1
18	Alabama	43	43	0	43	Colorado	6	8	-2
19	Arkansas	50	50	0	44	Idaho	39	41	-2
20	Arizona	24	24	0	45	Montana	40	42	-2
21	Delaware	21	21	0	46	South Dakota	45	47	-2
22	Minnesota	9	9	0	47	Washington	12	14	-2
23	Missouri	36	36	0	48	Florida	37	40	-3
24	New Jersey	4	4	0	49	Utah	27	30	-3
25	New York	1	1	0	50	Ohio	32	39	-7

Regional Rankings

Midwest

Regional Rank	State	2025 Total
1	Illinois	88.47
2	Minnesota	87.33
3	Michigan	82.07
4	Wisconsin	68.72
5	North Dakota	56.47
6	Nebraska	53.40
7	Kansas	51.80
8	Iowa	47.45
9	Missouri	43.60
10	Indiana	42.67
11	Ohio	42.35
12	South Dakota	34.80

Southeast

Regional Rank	State	2025 Total
1	Virginia	80.47
2	Georgia	53.50
3	North Carolina	53.05
4	West Virginia	46.90
5	Kentucky	43.25
6	Florida	42.20
7	Alabama	39.40
8	Mississippi	37.27
9	Tennessee	35.00
10	Louisiana	33.00
11	South Carolina	32.15
12	Arkansas	29.50

Northeast

Regional Rank	State	2025 Total
1	Massachusetts	93.67
1	New York	93.67
3	Connecticut	92.27
4	New Jersey	90.00
5	Vermont	89.50
6	Maine	88.67
7	Rhode Island	85.70
8	Maryland	84.83
9	New Hampshire	76.08
10	Delaware	71.43
11	Pennsylvania	66.27

Southwest

Regional Rank	State	2025 Total
1	New Mexico	86.93
2	Arizona	61.05
3	Texas	44.70
4	Oklahoma	37.62

West

Regional Rank	State	2025 Total
1	Colorado	87.67
2	Oregon	87.00
3	California	86.67
4	Washington	84.83
5	Hawaii	81.27
6	Nevada	79.67
7	Alaska	56.00
8	Utah	52.50
9	Wyoming	45.42
10	Idaho	42.07
11	Montana	40.62



Key Developments

The Equality Gap Widens—State Polarization on LGBTQ+ Rights Intensifies

For the third consecutive year, LGBTQ+ equality is declining across the United States. The national average score dropped slightly from 62.77 to 62.62 (a 0.23% decrease)—continuing a concerning downward trend that began after a four-year period of progress ended in 2022.

In 2025, state polarization on LGBTQ+ rights reached new heights. 19 states (38%) experienced a decline in score, and 12 states (24%) remained static, meaning over 60% of states failed to show progress. Rankings shifted dramatically: 19 states dropped in rank year-over-year, with Ohio (-7), Florida (-3), and Utah (-3) among the most significant declines.

This ongoing regression is largely driven by a surge in anti-LGBTQ+ legislation and the election of state leaders who openly oppose LGBTQ+ rights. In the wake of the 2024 elections, more governors and senators are taking increasingly extreme positions, eliminating the middle ground that once existed.

Anti-LGBTQ+ Legislation Continues to Rise

In 2025 alone, the ACLU tracked over 500 anti-LGBTQ+ bills introduced across 48 states. These bills overwhelmingly target trans and nonbinary youth and include:

- Bans on gender-affirming care
- Restrictions on bathroom and sports participation for trans youth
- "Don't Say Gay" style education bans
- Laws narrowing the legal definition of sex
- Provisions permitting discrimination under the guise of religious freedom
- Prohibitions on updating gender markers on identity documents

The Impact of Leadership

State leadership continues to play a critical role. Where governors and legislators act in support of LGBTQ+ people, positive momentum follows.

- **Michigan** rose four spots in the rankings (now #16) after Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed legislation expanding hate crime protections to include LGBTQ+ individuals.
- **Kentucky** jumped five spots (now #37), thanks to Governor Andy Beshear's vetoes of anti-LGBTQ+ bills and public support for banning conversion therapy.
- **Georgia** improved its score by two spots (now #27) after successfully blocking over 20 anti-LGBTQ+ bills and receiving bipartisan support for LGBTQ+ rights from its senators.

Data Highlights from 2025

- **Top-ranked states:** Massachusetts and New York tied for first with a score of 93.67, followed by Connecticut (92.67), New Jersey (90.00), and Vermont (89.50).
- **Lowest-ranked state:** Arkansas remains in last place (29.50) for the third year in a row, with South Carolina (32.15) and Louisiana (33.00) rounding out the bottom.
- **Regional breakdown:**
 - The Northeast dominates the top 10, with 6 of the highest-ranked states.
 - The Southeast has 6 of the 10 lowest-ranked states.

Where Do We Go From Here?

There is no longer room for neutrality. As anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric becomes policy, and elected officials take firmer stances, the divide between states is widening. Businesses and lawmakers must act to both protect their communities and to ensure inclusive environments that drive innovation, economic success, and access for all individuals and families to thrive.

We applaud the states that advanced LGBTQ+ rights in 2025 and urge all others to follow suit. Equality is not just the right thing to do, it's the right thing for business and communities.

Actionable Strategies for Business Leaders

Responding to the 2025 LGBTQ+ Business Climate Index

The 2025 Index reveals a stark divide: LGBTQ+ rights are eroding in many states, and businesses operating in those environments face escalating risks. Here's how smart companies are responding, with data-driven decisions and decisive leadership:



1. Invest Where Inclusion Wins

Relocate talent and operations to top-ranked states like MA, NY, CT, CO, and CA. These states offer legal protections, healthcare access, and higher employee retention.

Emerging leaders like MI and KY show real progress—prime ground for future growth.

Avoid high-risk states (AR, FL, TN, TX, OH) where laws create compliance headaches and talent flight.

2. Protect and Retain Your Workforce

- 76% of Gen Z won't accept jobs in anti-LGBTQ+ states
- 89% of millennials prioritize LGBTQ+-inclusive healthcare policies
- Respond with "Safe Haven" benefits: gender-affirming care, relocation stipends, and remote work options for employees in hostile regions. these legislative

efforts block access to healthcare, education, legal recognition, and the right to publicly exist. States enacting these policies saw the steepest score declines

3. Lead Publicly

Silence = complicity. Employees, consumers, and investors expect corporate action.

- Speak out against discriminatory laws
- Suspend political donations to anti-equality lawmakers
- Join legal efforts and issue public statements

4. Align Your Supply Chain

Hold partners and suppliers to your values.

- Require inclusion benchmarks
- Divest from vendors in low-ranking states

5. Support Staff in Crisis Zones

In states with healthcare bans and school censorship laws, offer:

- Out-of-state care and travel coverage
- Legal aid
- Remote flexibility

6. Drive Long-Term Change

- Lobby for state-level protections
- Support ballot measures
- Partner with advocacy groups and fund pro-equality PACs

The Bottom Line:

Companies that lead on LGBTQ+ inclusion will win talent, trust, and long-term growth. Those that don't face mounting reputational and operational risk.

Business Markers

To represent the business impact of statewide support or marginalization of LGBTQ+ identities, we calculated three additional business markers.

The first represents the benefit to state economies of having more inclusive nondiscrimination practices. A Williams Institute report suggests that adding nondiscrimination protections could result in a potential 3% gain in GDP. We reported this potential increase for each state and noted what the effect may have been in states where protections already exist for LGBTQ+ people.

The second is an assessment of the cost to businesses of employee turnover due to marginalizing state practices or discriminatory environments. Utilizing 2018 average annual salary data, we calculated the cost of replacement of a (general) worker in the state (20% of their salary) and the cost of replacement of an executive (213% of their salary).

As a third marker of state wellness, we calculated the difference in the number of married couples in each state, from 2013 to 2015, using tax data. We believe that couples were most likely to feel comfortable marrying in states with support, representation, and community. In turn, more marriages promote other individuals and couples choosing the state as a place to live and work. These data may serve as a beneficial marker of LGBTQ+ well-being in the community and at work.

Partners



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Special Thanks

Thank you to Out Leadership's Global Advisory Board members, and our member companies' senior leaders, who have committed to using this Index.

Disclaimer

Out Leadership has made every effort to ensure that the information contained within this Index is accurate and up to date as of April 15, 2025. This Index is provided for educational and informational purposes only, and should not be construed as legal advice. The information is not guaranteed to be correct, complete, or current. If you would like to suggest an edit to this Index, please contact info@outleadership.com.

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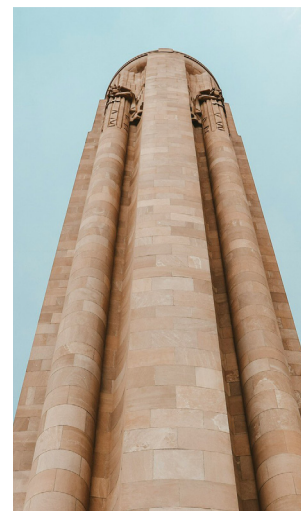
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