

# HOW TO SUPPORT LGBTQIA+ STUDENTS AT **NON-AFFIRMING** **RELIGIOUS COLLEGES**

## **Follow LGBTQIA+ student groups**

Many of these schools have official or unofficial LGBTQIA+ student groups that run social media accounts. If you live near a non-affirming, private, religious college, see if there is an active LGBTQIA+ group on or off campus. You can follow them on social media to stay up to date with what is happening and ways that you can support them.

## **Sign and share petitions**

Signing and sharing petitions is an easy way to show your support. Because many students at these universities fear retaliation for public demonstrations, online petitions are sometimes the only way for students to advocate for themselves and their rights. If you see a petition on social media, sign it. Then share it with your network. The more visible support that queer students have, the better.

## **Show up to protests when invited**

Sometimes students may plan public protests on or near campus. If you live near one of these campuses and hear about a public protest that is happening, show up and show solidarity. Your physical presence can be important for students who are feeling isolated in the fight for equality. LGBTQIA+ students are not supported by their colleges, but at least they can be supported by their communities.



## Offer space

Many queer students on private, religious colleges are denied safe spaces to meet. A lot of schools refuse to acknowledge LGBTQIA+ student clubs, which means queer students are not allowed to freely gather on campus without being targeted by their administration. If you have a business or church with meeting space, consider offering your space to queer students at a nearby private, religious college. Having a safe space to meet away from their universities can help queer students tremendously.

## Educate yourself and others

Queer students in private, religious colleges can feel overlooked by the broader fight for LGBTQIA+ rights. There is an unfair assumption that people at religious colleges chose to be there, so they chose to be discriminated against. The factors that lead people to attend religious colleges are complex, but regardless, no one deserves to be treated unequally. Take time to learn the stories of these students and what they have faced. And furthermore, take time to learn the history of religious exemptions and how they have been intentionally weaponized to discriminate against BIPOC and queer students. That way you can educate others as well.

## Donate money

If you are in a financial position where you are able to donate money, funding activism is an essential part of student support. There may be students at a campus near you who want to organize, but they don't have the money to do so. If there are students in your social network that are seeking financial support for student activism, consider whether that is something you are able to support. And if you don't know of any specific students or colleges, give directly to REAP. Donations to REAP will support queer student activism on campuses across the country.