

Kansas City DSA Steering Committee Statement on KCMO City Council Vote to Repeal Ban on Conversion Therapy

On May 21, in a 7-5 vote, the City Council of KCMO voted to repeal its ban on conversion therapy for children, a practice of using cruel, manipulative methods intended to force queer children to comply with the narrow views of gender and sexuality held by Christian nationalists. This practice has been widely condemned as tantamount to torture.

The following Councilmembers voted in favor of the repeal:

- Mayor Quinton Lucas
- Kevin O’Neill
- Nathan Willett
- Melissa Robinson
- Darrell Curls
- Ryana Parks-Shaw
- Johnathan Duncan

In 2019, KCMO passed a bill banning the practice of conversion therapy. In 2023, they passed a non-binding resolution declaring KC to be a “safe haven” for LGBTQ+ individuals, protecting those seeking gender affirming care. The recent City Council decision makes clear that their “safe haven” resolution was little more than an empty promise which the city had no intention of fulfilling.

Council members have claimed that they voted in favor of this repeal because of the MO Attorney General's lawsuit against the city, citing SCOTUS's recent decision that conversion therapy is “free speech.” While it may be true that the MO courts would force the city to repeal the bill, the city's decision to comply in advance is a damning sign of their willingness to roll over any time fighting against fascism becomes an inconvenience to them.

Over the past year, the queer community of both Missouri and Kansas have watched their rights and protections be stripped away day-by-day. As is their common practice, Democratic officials have once again thrown the queer community under the bus. The leaders of KC have willingly stepped aside without resistance, doing the work of the fascists for them.

In the comment section of a social media post (a place where he spends an inordinate amount of time), Mayor Quinton Lucas defended his decision to lead the repeal effort, stating, “We got sued on First Amendment grounds. The US Supreme Court recently ruled in favor of the view that

conversion therapy bans violate the Constitution.” He went on to express concern about the potential damages that the city could incur from the litigation. This sudden concern for fiscal responsibility led City Council to shift the risk from themselves onto the shoulders of queer children.

Lucas’ statements expose a fundamental flaw in the liberal approach to politics: an underlying assumption that the Constitution is anything other than a device for the ruling class to block democracy. For decades, we have watched the GOP use the Constitution exactly as it was intended to be used: as a minority check to overturn democratic decisions and maintain the power of the ruling class. Liberal politicians continue to operate as if the Constitution and its courts can be used for the sake of the citizens it governs.

Ultimately, the courts do not protect citizens. The courts have not failed; they are functioning exactly as designed. We have watched the courts at every level of American government throughout the history of this country used for the same purpose: to enforce the will of the ruling class against the people—especially against the most vulnerable. However, City Council could have acted as a roadblock to fascist consolidation of power so that the queer community and allies could regroup for a sustained fight on multiple fronts. Instead, this repeal was quietly rushed through City Council with little media coverage or public statement from the city and the community was caught off-guard.

By the power of the Constitution and its courts, the ruling class builds concentration camps for Black and Brown people, tramples on the freedoms of Indigenous peoples, kills queer children, wages genocidal wars and prosecutes those who speak out against them. Under this system, the owning class decides the law. The liberal response to this fundamentally anti-democratic system is to roll over at the first sign of pressure, throw their hands up in defeat, and tell us to fend for ourselves. This is why liberalism will always lead to fascism—it relies on the very same system of power through property ownership.

The Socialist response is to offer something better: a new constitutional order which places power in the hands of the working class rather than the owning class. The fight to construct a true democracy must be waged at every level of American society. As fascism reaches its tentacles into KC’s municipal government, the KCDSA will not accept the rulings of fascist courts. We continue to fight for a democratic society and the complete dismantling of the capitalist order.

Councilmember Johnathan Duncan, who had voted in favor of repealing the ban, later expressed regret for his vote and reiterated his commitment to listen and learn from the broader queer community. While this repeal was a step backwards, we acknowledge his willingness to accept responsibility for this decision and we will continue to hold him and other allies in leadership

accountable. This is a moment to course-correct and to use the power of City Council to wage an even greater fight against fascist consolidation of power.

We call on City Council to put forward a real plan to protect trans and queer youth and the broader queer community. We demand that the city's leaders put actions behind their claims of allyship and work with their constituents to make Kansas City a true sanctuary city. We look forward to working with all councilmembers who wish to join us in the fight against fascism and to bring forward legislation to ensure Kansas City steps up for its Trans residents and the wider queer community.

A better world is possible, but only if we fight for it.

Kansas City DSA Steering Committee

May 27, 2026