



Gender Equity in the Crosshairs: The Policy Pushback Against Women and Women's Rights

A Response from the Inclusion Allies Coalition
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HEAD: THE CASE FOR URGENCY



Purpose

To equip leaders, stakeholders, and allies with key insights and action steps for advancing gender equity in the U.S. and globally – anchored in inclusive engagement of women, men, girls, boys, and all identities.

Definition

Inclusive gender equity ensures that all employees – across gender identity, race, age, and ability – have equitable access to opportunity, advancement, and wellbeing. It's not just about fairness – it's about performance.

The Case for Urgency

Population & Representation

Women comprise 50.5% of the U.S. population and 49.73% globally, yet remain under-represented in leadership, economic power, and political decision-making. In the U.S., women earn approximately 83 cents to every dollar earned by men and hold only 28% of congressional seats. Globally, just 26.7% of parliamentary seats are occupied by women.

The 2025 Global Gender Gap Report shows that only 68.8% of the global gender gap has been closed, with the U.S. ranking 43rd out of 146 countries.

The Global Gender Gap Index 2025

- Health and survival gap closed: 96.2% gap closed – near parity, but disparities remain in access and outcomes
- Educational attainment gap closed: 95.1% gap closed – strong progress, yet leadership and STEM gaps persist
- Economic participation gap closed: Only 61.0% gap closed – women remain underpaid, underemployed, and underrepresented
- Political empowerment gap closed: Just 22.9% gap closed – women hold a fraction of leadership roles globally

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Challenges Facing Men and Boys

But gender equity must also include the challenges facing men and boys:

- College dropout rates: Men are more likely to drop out of college than women, with an overall dropout rate of 32.9%. Computer science majors – predominantly male – have the highest dropout rate at 10.7%.
- Isolation and technology use: Many young men report spending excessive time online, often in solitary digital environments. This correlates with declining social skills and relationship readiness.
- Mental health and suicide: Men account for nearly 80% of suicides in the U.S. and are significantly less likely to seek help.
- Substance use: Males are more likely to engage on high-risk drug use, especially in late adolescence and early adulthood.

These patterns reflect a broader disengagement – from education, relationships, and emotional well-being. They are not separate from gender equity – they are central to it.

Advocacy Implication:

Equity must address the full spectrum of gendered harm.

Supporting men and boys is not a detour – it's part of the path.





HEART: THE HUMAN IMPACT



Gender Equity Is About All of Us

Gender equity is not just about women—it's about all of us.

It's about the father who wants to nurture without judgment. The boy learning that strength includes tenderness. The woman who leads with brilliance but faces bias. The nonbinary teen who longs to be seen.

Many boys grow up without emotional role models—taught to be tough, but not vulnerable. As they grow, this can lead to isolation, anxiety, and broken relationships. Think of the young man who drops out—not for lack of ability, but lack of belonging. The father who wants to be present but feels unprepared. The teen who turns to substances to avoid feeling.

These are not personal failures, they're cultural ones.

While women continue to lead, contribute, and care for others, many still face persistent barriers: limited access to leadership roles, heavy caregiving responsibilities, and financial instability. These challenges take a real emotional toll. But with support, visibility, and equity-driven action, healing is not only possible—it's powerful.

Advocacy Implication

We must create spaces where all genders—especially men and boys—can heal, grow, and lead with empathy. Equity isn't about blame. It's about balance. It's about belonging.



HANDS: THE CALL TO ACTION

To advance gender equity inclusively, we must act with intention and humility. Hands build what hearts envision and heads understand. Inclusion is not just about who's at the table – it's about how we build the table, together.

Policy Priorities



- Ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)
- Enforce pay equity and expand parental leave
- Fund education and mentorship for girls and boys
- Promote inclusive leadership pipelines
- Protect reproductive rights and prevent gender-based violence

Organizational Actions



- Train all leaders in inclusive practices
- Elevate diverse voices in decision-making
- Create safe, equitable workplaces
- Support mental health and emotional literacy

Community Engagement



- ◆ Host dialogues across gender and identity
- ◆ Celebrate allyship and shared wins
- ◆ Invest in healing spaces and mentorship



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