


GOP protest against Anne Arundel trans pride event met with opposition

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Shouts of “repent, repent, repent” clashed with chants of “shame” from across the slim concrete sidewalk that separated two groups determined to show they were protecting Anne Arundel children from the other side.

About 30 members of the Maryland Republican Party gathered at the Glen Burnie Library Monday evening to protest a party celebrating Trans Day of Visibility with handmade signs, curated bible verses and megaphones. They were met with roughly 100 counter-protesters with cowbells, pride flags and messages of acceptance.

Inside, attendees of the library’s Trans Pride Party sat together, hunched over desks as they colored pronoun pins, listened to Chappell Roan and other musical artists and checked out books from a Trans Day of Visibility section.

“As a parent, it’s important to show your kids that you will love and accept them no matter who you are, and to stand up to hate and for what’s right,” Jennifer Pilholski of Severna Park said. “Why not come here and show love to our trans neighbors, friends and coworkers.”

Pilholski, flanked by her two young daughters, Anna and Emily, said the trio made it a point to brave the rain and attend the event and protest to show Anne Arundel is welcoming to the LGBTQ+ community.

The event received mixed reactions last week after U.S. Rep. Andy Harris condemned the library and demanded a re-examination of federal funding for it. On Monday, the Trump administration reportedly moved to shutter the agency that provides funding for public libraries.

“Anywhere federal tax dollars are used in the library system — and honestly in the museum system — we have to be careful that it’s not used for events or exhibits like this that I think would be repulsive to the majority of American taxpayers,” Harris told The Baltimore Sun last week.

| Anne Arundel County Public Library Trans Pride Party draws protest | PHOTOS

Chuck Thompson, a Pasadena resident, held a sign that read, “Hey perverts, leave our kids alone.” He said the library should be hosting events promoting Judeo-Christian principles instead.

The county library system holds more than 6,000 events annually. Other Monday events included “Teen Book Lovers,” “Bon Voyage Crayon Party” and “Robotics at the Library.”

The Anne Arundel County Library system received \$31.67 million from the county in fiscal year 2025. The system’s total budget was \$35.5 million, of which \$3.1 million came from the state.

The library also receives about \$25,000 in federal funding per year, according to Christine Feldmann, the library’s director of marketing and communications.

Feldmann said federal funding is used for staff development and training, not events. She also said the Trans Pride Party didn’t use any county funds. The \$20 worth of supplies — like rainbow wristbands and “Annapolis Pride” stickers — came from the Library Foundation, which raises money for the library system, among other things, according to its website.

“The Maryland Republican Party has called this ‘A public indoctrination,’ that is not what this is,” Feldmann said. “This is an event where families, kids and their parents are here to support one another to feel like they’re not alone.”

The Trump administration has made sweeping cuts to diversity, equity and inclusion programs across the federal government, including an executive order banning trans people from the military. Many of the executive orders are being challenged in court.

The event was open to all ages, troubling Harris and members of the Maryland Republican Party at the protest. Accusations of grooming were frequently thrown across the four-foot sidewalk separating the two sides.

A 2022 Pew Research Center survey found that 1.6% of U.S. adults are transgender or nonbinary — meaning their gender differs from their assigned sex at birth.

“Our taxpayer money goes to this, they are one percent of society,” Christopher Anderson, a Baltimore City resident, said. “They keep mentioning God and the scripture but none of them are Christians. It’s obvious they want to groom children and get children to not think the way of the bible but think the way of whatever their agenda is.”

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Rev. DV Yost, a non-binary pastor at Arnolia United Methodist Church in Parkville, was at the event in support of a transgender student.

“I really have a hard time finding good evidence that Jesus would be against LGBTQIA people,” Yost said. “The beauty of the LGBTQIA community really embodies the fruit of the spirit and is faithful to biblical text and the power of God incarnate.”

While Harris said the government should withhold federal money until lawmakers ensure recipients are not promoting LGBTQ+ events, Anne Arundel County Public Library CEO Skip Auld remains undeterred.

“When I heard [Harris] had made this attack, I said to several colleagues, ‘We’re not backing down on this,’ ” Auld said. “We would never dial back on any of this. We try to meet their needs as they develop.”

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