



COVERAGE OF LGBTQ ISSUES IN SPANISH-LANGUAGE ONLINE NEWS SOURCES IN 9 SOUTHERN STATES BETWEEN 2020–2023

Media is an influential force across the political, generational, and cultural spectrum. Considering the current sociopolitical climate and its impact upon legislation, particularly concerning to the daily lives of community members, the Latino Commission on AIDS and the Latinos in the South program with grant funding support from Emory University through the COMPASS Initiative, sought to examine the representation and coverage of LGBTQ issues in Spanish-language online news sources across nine Southern states. This report explores how news outlets address topics related to the LGBTQ community, including the breadth, tone, and framing of coverage. Our analysis focused on identifying patterns, gaps, and potential biases in reporting, providing insights into how Spanish-speaking audiences in the South are informed about LGBTQ matters. Based on our findings, recommendations are provided for news outlets and staff to strengthen their depth and balance of coverage and contextualize reporting within the community and political landscape.

METHODS

We sought to identify at least two Spanish-language online news sources, serving a primarily Latinx audience, for each of the nine Southern states. We used a previously compiled list of local news sources in the nine Southern states as a starting point. Some of the listed news sources were still actively publishing content, while others no longer existed. After that, we utilized search engines using the terms *Hispanic newspaper* and *noticias en español*.

Sources were selected if they met the following criteria: primarily covered news in Spanish, had an online searchable archive, and offered local, regional, or state-wide reporting in the selected states. Sources were

excluded if they focused on international coverage, meaning they reported for an overseas audience.

Once a news source was identified, we searched for articles in their online archives using the following terms: *gay*, *género*, *homosexual*, *lgbt*, *orientación sexual*, and *transgénero*. We selected articles containing these terms or covering topics on LGBTQI+ issues and downloaded them.

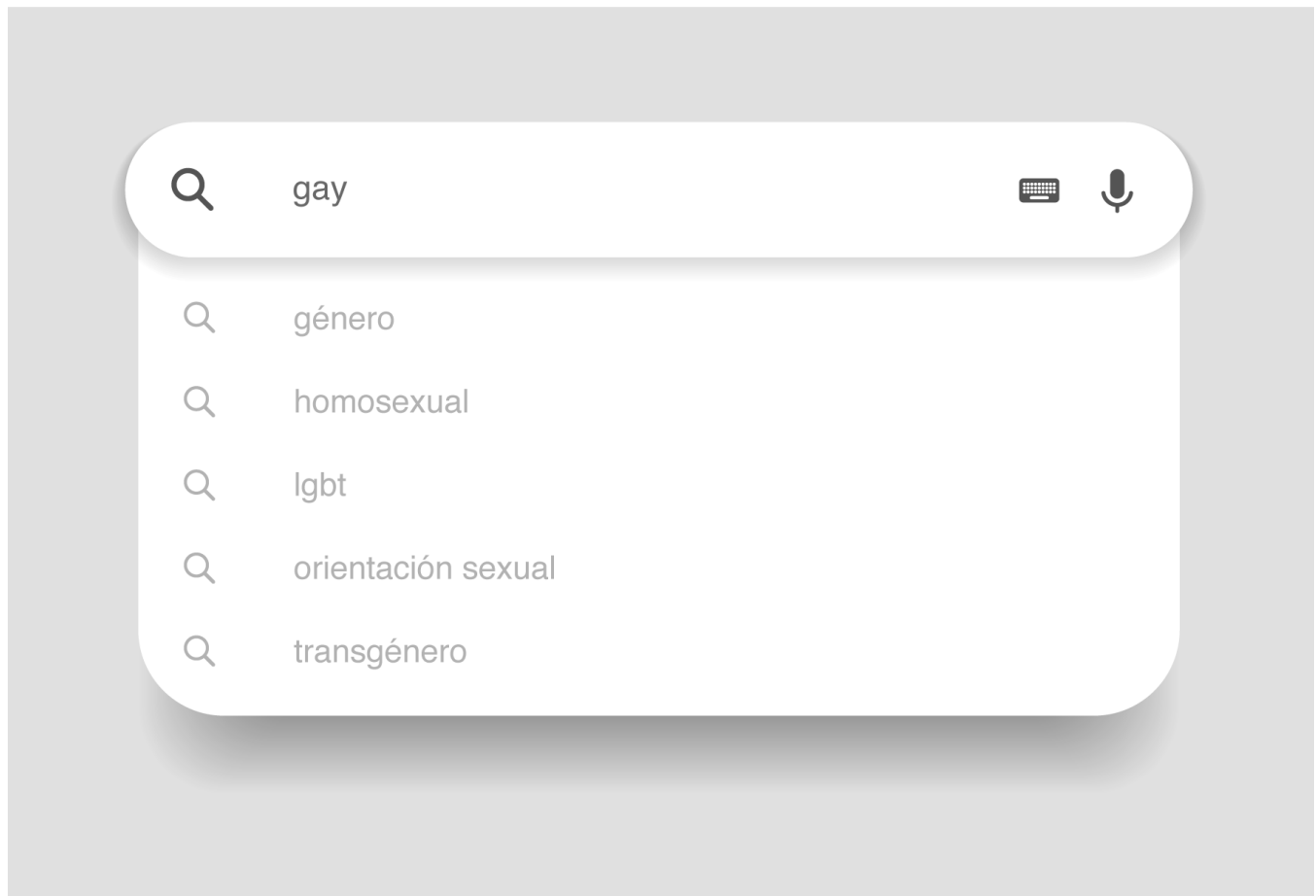
We examined the article's section title and tags to determine whether it offered international, national, or local coverage of the issue. If an article's scope overlapped categories, the dateline describing where

the story originated was used to categorize the type of news story coverage. If an article did not belong to a specific section or did not have a dateline, the article's subject matter was used to determine the designation. If the article collected was an opinion editorial that did not have a section or dateline, we used the city where the news source was published.

For each source, we sought to examine between two and five articles for each year between 2020 and 2023 (Table 2). For news sources with more articles, we sought diversity across years (i.e., publication date) and topics. In some cases, we selected news covered in other news sources to examine differences in reporting (e.g., articles about religion and transgender care).

Through an initial reading, we produced brief summaries for each of the articles. Then, we utilized the summaries to identify major themes in the following areas: sources, overall content (i.e., headlines, language, and images), and major topics. During a second reading of the articles, we added additional information to the summaries and grouped articles along topics. We identified major themes within each topic and looked for connections between the stories. The number of articles for each state was small and varied greatly from state to state. Therefore, we were not able to conduct a state-based comparative analysis.

After identifying the online news sources that provide news in Spanish language, the study search for keywords covering topics on LGBT issues including news report and opinion editorials.



FINDINGS

Articles covered various issues, including policy, politics, healthcare, community events, and religion. The number of articles varied by state and news source. Table 1 below shows the number of articles per state and by news source examined.

State	# of news sources (23)	# of articles (51)	Name of Source (# of articles collected per source)
Alabama	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Hola Latino (0) · Latino News LLC (4)
Florida	3	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Periodico La Costa Latina Newspaper (4) · El Osceola Star (0) · El Nuevo Herald (2)
Georgia	4	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Mundo Now (0) · La Voz Latina (0) · El Nuevo Georgia (1) · La Visión (2)
Louisiana	2	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Jambalaya News (3) · El Tiempo New Orleans (2)
Mississippi	2	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · La Noticia MS (0) · Mississippi Today (1)
North Carolina	2	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Progreso Hispano (4) · Qué Pasa (3)
South Carolina	2	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · El Informador (4) · Pasa La Voz Noticias (3)
Tennessee	3	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · La Noticia Newspaper (0) · Latino News Tennessee (2) · Nashville Noticias (5)
Texas	3	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Noticias del Este De Texas (5) · La Prensa Texas (3) · El Mundo (3)

Table 1: Number of news source sources collected by state

The number of articles also varied by year. In particular, 2022 had more articles related to LGBTQI+ issues. Table 2 below shows the number of articles per state and by year.

State	2020	2021	2022	2023
Alabama	2	0	2	0
Georgia	0	0	2	1
Florida	2	1	3	0
Louisiana	1	2	2	0
Mississippi	0	0	0	1
North Carolina	1	2	2	1
South Carolina	2	2	2	1
Tennessee	0	2	2	3
Texas	5	3	2	0
Total	13	12	17	7

Table 2: Total number of articles collected per state per year from 2020-2023

Finally, most articles focused on national and local news rather than international ones. Table 2 below shows the number of articles per state and by geographic focus.

State	International	National	Local
Alabama	1	2	1
Georgia	0	2	1
Florida	1	2	3
Louisiana	1	3	1
Mississippi	0	0	1
North Carolina	1	2	4
South Carolina	1	1	5
Tennessee	2	1	4
Texas	1	3	7
Total	8	16	27

Table 3: Total number of articles per state per focus area

SOURCES

The articles’ content came from various sources, i.e., reporters, editorial staff, news services, and institutional press releases. News sources published articles from news services organizations such as the Associated Press, EFE, Univision, and Telemundo.¹⁻⁹ Stories from news services used a more neutral tone and positive language in their reporting, including three of the four articles on religious topics.

While many articles were from editorial staff,¹⁰⁻¹⁹ only two came directly from the paper’s editor.^{20,21} An editorial in Florida linked the elections to policies and court decisions on the future protections for LGBTQ+ workers.²⁰ The publisher of the Prensa Texas, an LGBTQ+ supporter, published an article in which she posted her readers’ answers to whether to publicly support the LGBTQ community and the impact on her paper.²¹ The readers’ responses mostly agreed with her decision to support the LGBTQ community. Similar to articles from news services, articles from the editorial staff and editors had a tone more supportive of LGBTQ+ issues.

OVERALL CONTENT

We analyzed the overall content of the articles in terms of the language used, the wording of the headlines, and the images used to accompany the articles.

USE OF LANGUAGE

Generally, the language used for headlines and the content was mainly sensitive to the LGBTQ+ communities. The articles used terms such as LGBT,

LGBTQ, gay, gais, queer, transgender, and homosexual. Articles also used sexual orientation and same-sex (“mismo sexo”). Only one article used transsexuality (“transexualidad”) in the heading and the content.²² Another report identified a shooter as a transgender woman and used the term woman in quotes within the article.²³

There was not a standard for the utilization of these terms. However, it seemed to depend on the source of the news and on how people quoted in the articles referred to the issue and LGBTQ+ communities. For instance, two pieces, one from the European Union and another from Georgia, used the term LGBTIQ.^{5,24}

HEADLINES

Headlines can convey the news source’s support for or condemnation of LGBTQ+ communities or issues, including political ones. There were no headlines with an openly anti-LGBTQ+ tone. Most of the articles had headlines with a positive spin. For instance, the headlines of the articles on Pope Francisco’s support for LGBTQ+ families and same-sex unions challenged assumptions about the Catholic church’s position.^{2,3,8}

Headlines also included positive reports on expanding services,²⁴⁻²⁷ protections for LGBTQ+ communities,^{5,6,9,10,15,28-33} and LGBTQ+ community events.^{13,34-38} A few articles reported on the discriminatory language of community leaders and elected officials,^{39,40} crimes against LGBTQ+ individuals,¹¹ and the detrimental impact of discriminatory legislation.^{12,17,19,41}

Mujer transgénero de 28 años fue quien mató a tres niños y tres adultos hoy en Nashville



Most articles contained positive or neutral headlines that were sensitive to the LGBTQ communities and there were no headlines with an openly anti-LGBTQ tone.

Some articles utilized a neutral tone when reporting on crime and violence,⁴²⁻⁴⁴ legislation,^{4,14,16,22,45-48} and tangential issues related to LGBTQI+ communities.^{1,49} Only one article had a negative spin, identifying a shooter by her gender identity and using the term woman in quotes within the article.²³

IMAGES

Like in the case of headlines, most articles contained positive or neutral images of the LGBTQ+ community or issue.^{1-3,8,9,11,17,24,27,35,38,41,45} For instance, all of the articles on religion displayed the image of Pope Francisco.^{1-3,8} An article for transgender rights in Ecuador showed the coordinator of a transgender advocacy group in front of a microphone giving a speech.⁹ A Texas article on the FBI's report on hate crimes in the U.S. had pictures of activists and people impacted.¹¹

Rainbow flags were a common theme in many of these images. For instance, a Tennessee article described an ACLU's report on anti-LGBTQ+ bills in Tennessee and Kentucky accompanied by a gavel hitting a rainbow flag.¹⁷ Similarly, an article on the Pride Event in Tyler, Texas, contained a positive picture of the event with two women holding hands and participants with rainbow flags.³⁸ Finally, a press release about the opening of two LGBTQ+ centers in Georgia contained a picture of Ariana Grande in the publication, likely to increase the visibility of the piece.²⁴

Francisco a padres de hijos LGBT: El papa los ama porque son hijos de Dios



Only one article had a negative spin, identifying a shooter as transgender woman but using the term "woman" in quotes within the article.

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

A few articles provided international news on LGBTQI+-related issues, e.g., Pope Francisco's comments and Pride events. Most international news came from news services. They were all positive in the reporting. For instance, a Texas opinion piece on 2022 Mexico Pride Unites, an LGBTQI+ conference in Mexico City, described growing up in Texas and Mexico and the challenges and successes of individuals, families, and activists to overcome discrimination.³⁷

All of the articles on international news dealt with issues of discrimination or political advances. For instance, a Louisiana Article from the EFE reported on advocacy efforts of the transgender community in Ecuador to guarantee labor rights.⁹ The article also reported on the professional challenges and employment discrimination experienced by the transgender community. The positive quotes from two elected assembly members further validated the positive tone of the content.

In a similar article, a North Carolina EFE article reported on the European Union's work against discrimination and hate crimes based on sexual orientation. It also cited countries within the European Union or in preparation to join it where there was less support for the social and legal integration of LGBTIQ communities within the larger society, including Poland and Hungary.⁵ Finally, a Tennessee article reported on the Mexican State of Sonora approving same-sex marriage.¹² The quotes utilized terms such as protection under the law,

human dignity, equality, and human rights. A quote from the Sonora governor stated that the step aligned the state with the Mexican Supreme Court's rulings.

NATIONAL, STATE, AND LOCAL LGBTQI+ NEWS

Several articles reported on controversies and advances related to national, state, and local LGBTQI+ rights. A Tennessee article described an ACLU's report recording dozens of anti-LGBTQ+ bills in Tennessee and Kentucky.¹⁷ The article pointed out that some laws already enacted had jeopardized federal funds for education and other services and included a picture of a gavel hitting a rainbow flag.

A few articles reporting on national progress toward equality, federal legislation, and guidelines to protect LGBTQI+ individuals portrayed these as advances toward equality. For instance, an updated Alabama article reported on the Boy Scouts of America allowing trans boys in their troops.²⁸ The article quoted the Boy Scouts spokesperson stating that the changes were due to changes in states and communities on gender definitions. Without mentioning any criticism, the article quoted a New Jersey mother whose son had been expelled after identifying as a trans boy.

Articles on federal legislation were also positive in their language, quotes, and images. In reporting on the addition of X as an option in the gender field of U.S. passports, a Louisiana article claimed, in a positive tone, this to be a "historic step in the recognition of the rights of those who do not identify with any of the two traditional genders."²⁹ The article quoted a public official and listed countries with similar options. Similarly, an Alabama article from the EFE linked the change to similar changes in other countries and to the "retroceso" (regression) in LGBT rights in Republican-controlled states.⁶ The article also pointed out lawsuits regarding body scanners at airports and other locations configured as male or female. While the article quoted President Biden linking the changes to steps to end violence against the LGBTQI+ communities, it also criticized the Biden administration for implementing these changes but not taking additional concrete steps to support the LGBT community.

Two more articles reported on legislation passed at the federal level. A Texas article from Telemundo news service described the approval in the House of the Equality Act to amend the Civil Rights Law of 1964 banning discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.³² While there is a quote from a far-right Republican elected congress member, most quotes are from Democrats supporting the legislation with appeals to ending discrimination and increasing equity. Furthermore, the article showed a man waving a large rainbow flag in front of the Supreme Court Building. Similarly, a North Carolina article reported on

Most national, state and local news reported on controversial legislation and the danger these laws represent to LGBTQ rights and the advancement of equity. These articles were positive in their language, quotes and images.

President Biden signing the Respect for Marriage Act.⁴⁶ It only quoted individuals supporting LGBTQ+ rights, e.g., President Biden, singer Cindy Lauper, and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Sometimes, news sources from one state reported on LGBTQI+-related news from another state.^{4,25,47} A Florida article reported on the Mayor of Mobile, Alabama, appointing two LGBTQ+ liaisons for his administration.²⁵ The article quoted the Mayor and the appointees making social and economic arguments for addressing the challenges of LGBTQ in the South and attracting students and corporate investment. Notably, the article also highlighted the coordination of the City of Mobile with the Human Rights Campaign, a national advocacy organization.

TOPICS

RELIGION

A few articles in Alabama, Florida, South Carolina, and Texas looked at religion and LGBTQ issues.^{1-3,8} However, these articles focused on the controversies surrounding Pope Francisco's position on LGBTQ issues. Three articles were from news services, one from the A.P. and two from EFE. Hence, their tone was somewhat neutral or positive towards LGBTQ communities. In addition, the four articles displayed photos of Pope Francisco, a key figure within the predominantly catholic Hispanic communities.

For instance, a Florida article reported on the meeting between the Pope and parents of LGBT children.⁸ The article reported on the challenges of integrating religious life and the past negative experiences of LGBT individuals with the Catholic church. However, the article had a positive perspective on the meeting, including the title *Francisco a padres de hijos LGBT: El papa los ama porque*

son hijos de Dios (Francisco to parents of LGBT children: The Pope loves them because they are God's children).

While the Florida article did not quote any divergent opinion, an article from South Carolina a couple of months later reported on the deletion from a documentary of an interview with Pope Francisco in which he expressed support for same-sex civil unions.¹ In particular, the Pope emphasized the church's role in protecting Catholic LGBT from discrimination.

Several more articles highlighted the divisions within the Catholic Church on LGBT issues and the challenges of managing the media.^{2,3} A Texas article also reported on Pope Francisco's supportive remarks and referred to the LGBT community as a marginalized group by the Catholic hierarchy. It also noted that a Vatican official who published a document that stated that the Catholic church would not bless same-sex unions because "God cannot bless sin" was later transferred.³

VIOLENCE AND CRIME

Several articles reported on violence and crime against LGBT individuals and LGBT venues.^{11,23,42-44} In a straightforward description, a Georgia article reports on the police arrest of a man accused of publishing terrorist videos on Instagram against

an Atlanta LGBTQ+ club.⁴² A Georgia article reported on a massacre in an elementary school committed by a woman, who the police reported as being transgender.²³ However, the article did not pathologize the shooter as a transgender individual. Similarly, a Florida article reported on an LGBTQ activist, the brother of a former Miami mayor, found dead in a dump.⁴⁴ The report followed a typical police report without going into gruesome or sensationalist reporting. On the contrary, it highlighted his work helping to create a passage for marriage equality in Florida.

While most articles had a straightforward tone, they also referenced the challenges experienced by the LGBTQ+ community. For instance, an article on the shooting at a Colorado LGBT club reported the incident and connected it to other shootings, including in Colorado and the one at Pulse, Florida.⁴³ A Texas article described the FBI's report on the impact of racism, anti-Hispanic sentiment, antisemitism, and homophobia in the U.S.¹¹ The article provided data on the types of crimes and populations impacted. While the article did not mention transphobia, it included information on crimes against transgender individuals and only quoted the Southern Poverty Law Center, an advocacy group.

LGBTQI+ YOUTH ISSUES

Many current state and national news on youth were related to Republican legislation and administrative regulations on youth, gender identity, and sexual orientation. At the same time, articles dealing with youth issues often presented positive advances for LGBTQI+ youth, including the opening of an LGBTQI+ high school²⁶ and the admission of trans kids to the Boy Scouts of America.²⁸ Several articles also highlighted the struggles of LGBTQI+ youth by alluding to their high rates of suicide and violence against them.^{5,26,30,41}

Even articles that dealt with controversial issues managed to provide a softer tone. For instance, a Texas advice column strongly argued about waiting to make any decisions on transgender care among those under 18.⁵⁰ At the same time, it provided educational information on the difference between gender and sexual orientation and on respecting LGBTQI+ individuals. A North Carolina article reported on controversial statements of the Republican Vice governor on the teaching of sexual education in schools and on equating homosexuality and transgender issues to filth.⁴⁰ While the article did not take a position, it included quotes from community leaders and a Democratic chamber member. In

A news article reported on controversial statements made by an elected official in North Carolina. While the article did not take a position, it included quotes from a state Representative from the opposite political party and reported of her press conference with two other LGBT members of the House of Representatives.



Foto Facebook Mark Robinson

addition, the text had hyperlinks to positive LGBTQI+ stories and resources.

In some cases, the articles came from news feeds with a somewhat neutral tone. For instance, an Alabama article on the Florida law preventing schools from discussing sexual identity quoted White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki and Florida Governor DeSantis.⁴ Nonetheless, the article called the proposal controversial and alluded to Psaki's comments as supporting the perspective of LGBTQ advocates. A North Carolina article reported on a press release by the Charlotte Pride condemning the potential enacting of the "Don't Say Gay" law submitted days earlier at Raleigh.³⁰ In addition to information about the law, the article cited data on the potential negative impact on youth's mental health and safety in the education system.

TRANSGENDER-RELATED LEGISLATION

Transgender issues have been at the forefront of the news, mainly led by Republican-sponsored legislation. Some of the articles were somewhat neutral in their reporting. For instance, a Mississippi article listed the legislative agenda and the law's passing in the lower chamber prohibiting gender-affirming medication and surgery.⁴⁶ A Tennessee article reported on the Governor signing a law preventing transgender athletes from participating in team sports not matching their gender at birth.¹⁴ The article presented a quote from the Republican legislator and a link to the Governor's Twitter.

In some cases, the articles were linked to supportive resources or information. For instance, a North Carolina article reported on a law enacted in Arkansas prohibiting transgender individuals from using bathrooms that coincide with their gender identity.⁴⁷ The article referenced similar laws in Alabama and Oklahoma and presented other proposed laws regarding gender care for youth. While the article did not quote advocates or people opposing the laws, it ended with a link to a positive video for families of transgender youth and an article on LGBTQ+ rights in Florida.

More articles were supportive of transgender-related issues through the use of headlines, supportive language, positive images, or quotes. A Louisiana article reported on the opposition of the Louisiana Governor to new anti-transgender legislation, including banning transgender girls from competing in women's sports.⁴⁵ The Governor is quoted as saying that the law is unnecessary, discriminatory, and hurtful. Interestingly, the article did not include quotes from people pushing the legislation.

A South Carolina article reported on the proposal to outlaw transgender health to youth in South Carolina.⁴⁸ While quoting the Senator introducing the bill, the heading and the article focused on the comments of a

community leader for women's rights and a pediatrician supporting the need for transgender health. In a follow-up article, the article described the impact of the provision of health and quoted opponents of the law and the family of a transgender child.²²

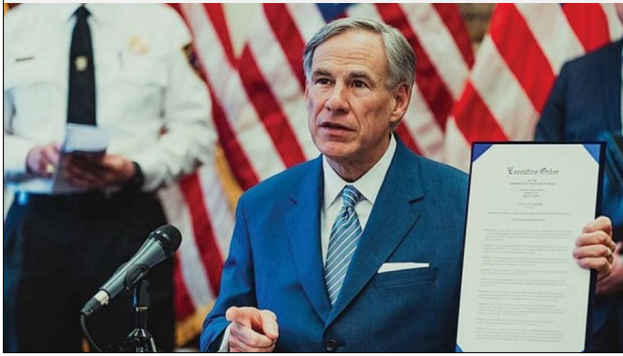
In another South Carolina article, the writer reported on the new law, the Save Women's Sports Act, requiring athlete youth to play in teams that match their gender at birth.⁴¹ The article used positive language in the headline to highlight the impact on LGBTQ+ youth and listed resources supporting LGBTQI+ individuals. In addition, the article had a large picture of someone holding a rainbow flag, utilized a large font size for the positive quotes, and listed LGBTQI+ resources.

HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

In addition to reporting on controversies over transgender health, several articles described legislation and actions to modify how the healthcare system serves LGBTQI+ individuals. In some cases, the articles had a neutral tone. In somewhat neutral terms, a brief South Carolina article discussed the proposal to allow mental health professionals to deny services based on religious beliefs.⁵¹ The article pointed out that the law was proposed in reaction to an ordinance prohibiting conversion therapy. Another article reported on the Tennessee Attorney General suing the Biden administration for requiring compliance with protection from discrimination against LGBTQ+ students as a condition for providing funding for food assistance.¹⁶ However, the article did not provide any opposing argument.

The majority of articles were supportive of transgender-related issues by quoting opponents of anti-transgender legislation, citing medical providers or parents of transgender individuals.

ABIERTA DISCRIMINACIÓN



Many articles covered legislation that aim to affect the healthcare system that served the LGBTQ community but those articles cited contra arguments to these legislations.

In others, the articles counterbalanced the proposed changes with quotes from LGBTQ+ advocates. For instance, a Tennessee article reported on the State's rejection of federal funds for HIV prevention and care programs.¹⁹ The article presented different positions on the issue. On the other hand, the article utilized quotes from clients, providers, and elected officials to counter the Tennessee Governor's justification for refusing the funding, i.e., focusing on "high" risk subgroups and defunding Planned Parenthood, an abortion provider.

A short Texas article on the Texas Governor signing a directive to remove disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity from the non-discrimination conduct guidelines of the Social Work Board.¹⁰ While the article is entitled "Open Discrimination," it only mentions the possibility of discrimination based on disability. In a follow-up article in a different paper, the Texas news source reports on restoring protections in the social work guidelines for social workers.³³ The heading includes Texan LGBTQ+ individuals as being protected from rejection by social workers. The article quotes the Governor's office stating the protections went beyond the state law. It also quoted a family and an activist.

POLITICS

Few articles dove deep into politics, but those that did tended to have a more supportive perspective of LGBTQ communities. For instance, an editorial in a Florida paper about the elections highlighted the importance of the Supreme Court decisions on various issues impacting LGBTQ+ and immigrants.²⁰ The editorial linked employment discrimination against Hispanic LGBTQ+ individuals to other core issues of importance to Hispanics, such as sanctuary cities, ICE, and DACA.

Candidatos LGBTQ logran triunfos históricos en EEUU



Politics were the less covered topics but when they were published, they presented a supportive perspective of the Hispanic LGBTQ communities.

A couple of articles showed how LGBTQ+ issues have entered the political news in Hispanic media. A Texas article from A.P. reported on the winnings of LGBTQ+ candidates in the 2020 national and state elections, including in Republican areas.⁷ The article referenced the challenges in Republican areas and that only three states have never elected LGBTQ+ candidates. Furthermore, it contained only supportive quotes and depicted Richie Torres, the first gay Black man elected to the U.S. House. In another article, former Puerto Rico Governor Rosello boasted about his support for LGBTQ+ rights as governor.⁴⁹

With a somewhat tongue-in-cheek tone, a Tennessee article reported on the Lieutenant Governor posting positive comments on an Instagram account of a young gay man.¹⁸ The article quoted critics calling him a hypocrite for supporting anti-LGBTQ legislation while posting borderline sexual comments on Instagram. Quoting the Lieutenant Governor's justification, the article had multiple images of his account.

LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY LIFE

Reporting on LGBTQ+ cultural and social events and the advances of LGBTQ+ advocacy efforts represented a break from news related to politics and legislation. Across the states, news sources published articles on LGBTQ+ cultural and community events, often with uplifting images and text. Sometimes, the articles were straightforward descriptions of cultural and community events, like a Florida article on the LGBTQ film festival in Pensacola³⁴ or a North Carolina article on the programming of the Lila Latinx/Latinx LGBTQ+ Initiative International.³⁵

Pride celebrations were always reported positively, often with individuals and rainbow flags. For instance, a press release on 2021 Charlotte Pride listed the events with a picture of a performer in drag;¹³ a brief article announced the upcoming LGBTQ+ celebration in Columbia, SC, with a picture of people carrying a rainbow flag;³⁶ and a report on the Pride Event in Tyler, Texas, provided a few positive quotes from the hundreds of participants and an uplifting picture of the event.³⁸ Given the report's content, the final quote from two religious counter-protesters makes them look intransigent.

Articles also reported on the expansion of LGBTQI+ services. For instance, a Georgia paper published a press release on the opening of two LGBTQI+ in Florida supported with funding from Ariana Grande.²⁴ Even when the services were controversial, articles tended to have a positive spin. Reporting on the opening of an LGBTQ school in Birmingham, Alabama, the article quoted the director and only alluded to the proposal receiving "mixed criticisms."²⁶ In another case, a Texas article reported on the opening of telehealth services at a community-based organization providing sexual health services and described the individual and institutional challenges LGBTQI+ experience receiving adequate health services.²⁷

News articles reported LGBTQ cultural, social and community events, often with uplifting images and text, which included Pride celebrations, expansion of LGBTQ services, opening of an LGBT centers and others.

DISCUSSION

Across states and news sources, articles covered various LGBTQI+ local, national, and international issues. Several news sources had none or few articles related to LGBTQI+ news; some published articles from news services organizations such as the Associated Press, EFE, Univision, and Telemundo; others had reporters covering these issues more frequently. The news source and the writer behind the story often informed the content's language and tone. For instance, articles from news feeds or editorial staff used a more neutral tone and positive language in their reporting.

The overall content analysis showed the headlines, language, and images were mostly sensitive to the LGBTQI+ communities. The articles used terms related to sexual orientation and gender identity, such as LGBT, LGBTQ, gay, gais, queer, transgender, and homosexual. There were no headlines with an openly anti-LGBTQI+ tone. On the contrary, most of the articles had headlines with a positive spin. Some articles utilized a neutral tone when reporting on crime and violence, legislation, and tangential issues related to LGBTQI+ communities. Like in the case of headlines, most articles contained positive or neutral images of the LGBTQ+ community or issue. For instance, articles on religion displayed the image of Pope Francisco. Many articles had pictures of activists and people impacted; rainbow flags were a common theme.

A few articles provided international news on LGBTQI+-related issues, often from news services. All of the articles on international news dealt with issues of discrimination or political advances in other Latin American countries and Europe. They used language and quotes that framed these advances within larger concepts such as equity under the law, human dignity, and human rights.

Most national and state news reported controversies and advances related to federal and state legislation. For instance, many articles reported on the many anti-LGBTQ+ bills being proposed or enacted across the Southern states. Sometimes, news sources from one state reported on LGBTQI+-related news from another, indicating an interest beyond the local news. The articles portrayed the advances as a move toward equality, using positive language, quotes, and images. On the other hand, anti-LGBTQI+ legislation was sometimes criticized as a "retroceso" (regression).

Articles reported on various topics, including religion, violence/crime, politics, community life, youth, transgender individuals, and health care. These articles often focused on major news stories from a sympathetic

perspective. For instance, a few articles looked at religion and LGBTQ issues but focused on the controversies surrounding the Catholic Church's and Pope Francisco's position on LGBTQ issues. Their headlines, language, and tone were mainly neutral or positive towards LGBTQ communities, highlighting the challenges of LGBTQ+ Catholics and the divisions within the Church. Similarly, articles reporting on violence and crime against LGBTQ+ individuals and venues had a straightforward tone but referenced the challenges experienced by the LGBTQ+ communities. They also linked explicitly or through hyperlinks to reports and resources on racism, anti-Hispanic sentiment, antisemitism, and homophobia.

Most articles focused on current hot issues such as LGBTQ+ youth, anti-transgender legislation, and access to LGBTQ+ care. For instance, news articles on youth were related to Republican legislation and administrative regulations on youth, gender identity, and gender-related care. In addition to reporting on controversies over youth and transgender health, several articles described legislation and actions to modify how the healthcare system serves LGBTQ+ individuals. In somewhat neutral terms, some articles explained the legislation or proposals, e.g., refusing services based on religious beliefs and rejecting federal funds for HIV prevention and care programs. Others interspersed the proposed changes with quotes from LGBTQ+ advocates, clients, and providers.

While many articles reported on legislative challenges, the articles seemed supportive through the use of headlines, quotes from community leaders, information on the potential negative and social impact, and hyperlinks to positive stories and resources. They also highlighted positive advances for LGBTQ+ communities, including the opening of LGBTQ+ high schools, the admission of trans kids to the Boy Scouts of America, and the ability to change your gender in U.S. passports. In addition, news on LGBTQ+ cultural and social events and the advances of LGBTQ+ advocacy efforts represented a break from less positive news. Across the states, news sources published articles with uplifting images and text, often with LGBTQ+ individuals and rainbow flags.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Encourage Diverse Coverage:** Consider exploring LGBTQ+ issues more comprehensively or publishing articles from other reliable sources (e.g., AP, EFE) to educate the public on these topics. This is particularly important if publications lack the capacity in this area.
2. **Standardize Language Usage:** Develop a glossary of appropriate language for discussing LGBTQ+ issues and set a standard for when to use specific terms.

Consistency in language usage can enhance clarity and respect within articles and foment stronger relationships with communities. We recommend exploring the GLAAD's Media Reference Guide, <https://glaad.org/reference/>.

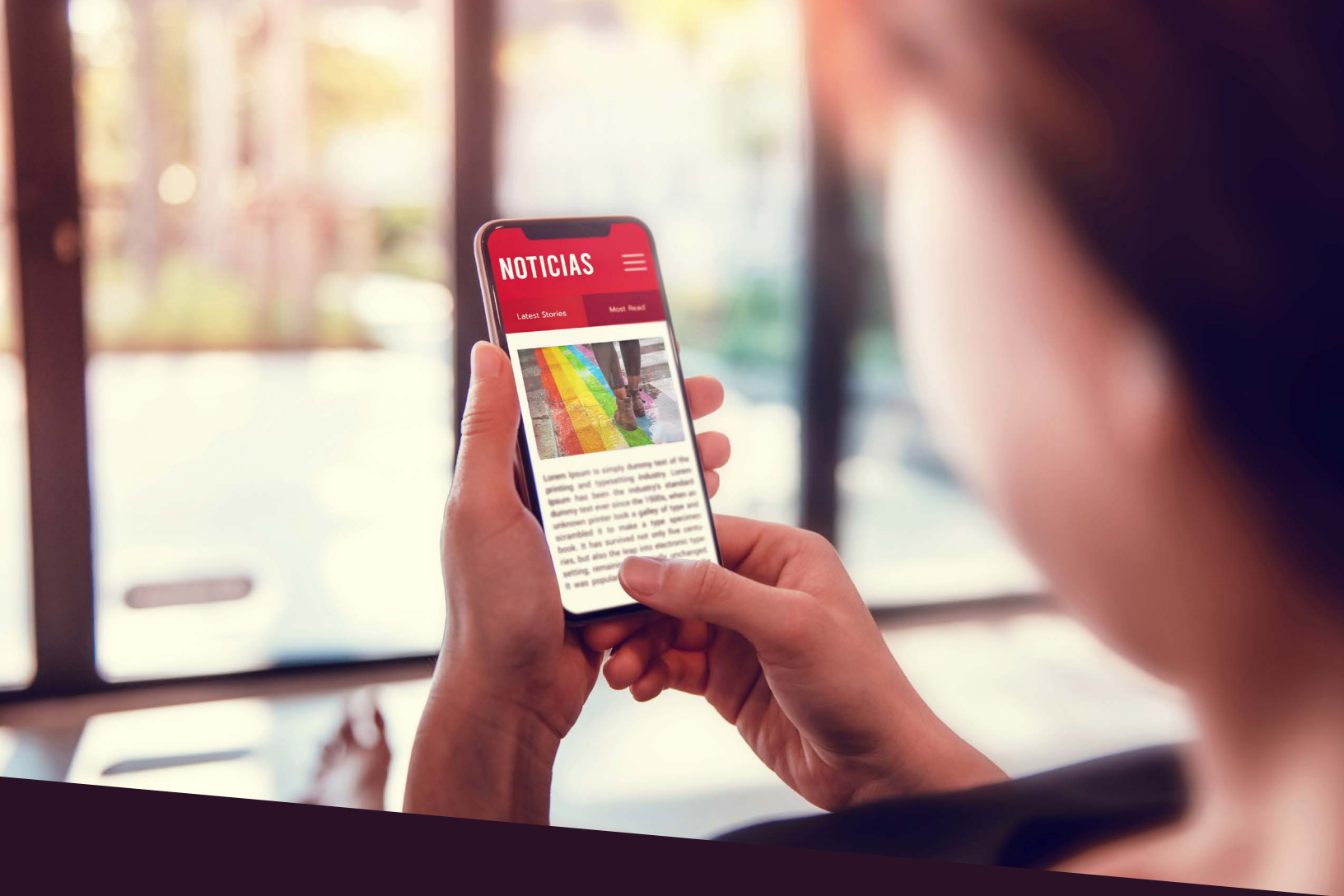
3. **Pay Attention to Headlines:** Headlines can convey as much about the article's position as the article itself. The tone they convey can significantly influence a reader's perception of a topic. Utilizing a neutral tone, especially when reporting on crime or sensitive issues, can help avoid contributing to negative stereotypes or perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community.
4. **Select Images Responsibly:** Images are an important part of any article. Using positive or neutral imagery in articles can help inform the reader about issues discussed in the article. Incorporating images that humanize individuals and depict them in empowering or affirming contexts (e.g., holding hands or Pride celebrations) can enhance reader understanding and empathy.
5. **Include Community Voices and Experiences:** Incorporate quotes directly from LGBTQ+ communities impacted by the issues. Highlighting quotes within the article format by using bold or larger fonts emphasizes their importance and authenticity.
6. **Provide Additional Resources:** Liking supportive resources or additional information when reporting on legislation can provide readers with further context and resources to deepen their understanding of the issue.
7. **Conceptualize Political Reporting:** When discussing LGBTQ+ issues within the political sphere, connect them to broader concerns relevant to the Latinx community, such as DACA, immigration, or employment. As part of our assessment, this contextualization not only helps readers understand the intersectionality of these issues and their broader impact but also leads to more fair reporting.
8. **Cover LGBTQ+ Events:** Reporting on LGBTQ+ cultural and community events offers readers a break from less positive news and provides an opportunity to highlight uplifting stories. These articles can contribute to a more balanced representation of LGBTQ+ life and advocacy efforts in the community. It also allows readers to further view the diversity in their communities.

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Latinos in the South is a regional program of the Latino Commission on AIDS that aims to build local leadership, develop networks and coalitions, enhance knowledge and cultural competency, and spur actions to address the health needs of Hispanic/Latinx communities in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Florida, and Tennessee. The program accomplishes these goals through capacity building, community organizing, leadership development, and networking initiatives, with a focus on community building and policy and advocacy.

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