

To the Arizona State University (ASU) community:

We as members of the LGBTQ+ Faculty/Staff Association, the Rainbow Coalition, and ASU community are writing to address an upcoming event being held by the ASU Center for American Institutions titled, “The Family Under Attack.”

This lunch conversation features a speaker by the name of Mary Rice Hasson who has perpetuated anti-trans messages framed under the guise of ‘countering gender ideology.’ Using religious teachings to justify their perspectives, she has been a vocal dissenter of LGBTQ+ rights in legal, educational, and political spaces.

Although we would like to say that these perspectives do not represent the ASU community, the very fact that this is being held by an ASU Center showcases that such rhetoric is clearly alive and well within our very university environment. Such an event and perspective is likely to be invited under the guise of free speech, a common strategy used by those who seek to marginalize and disempower identity groups such as those within the LGBTQ+ community. Colleges and universities should be spaces for the exchange of ideas and healthy debates—but not when individuals’ lives are in the balance.

In the interest of functioning within ‘a free speech’ frame, we would like to use our voice to speak to the damaging effect of these events and ideologies, together with affirming our LGBTQ+ students, staff, and faculty that we will continue to advocate and center your humanity.

Such an event is dangerous at this time. Vilifying the humanity of our trans siblings and the LGBTQ+ population in general only amplifies the anti-trans and -LGBTQ+ actions currently taking place in Arizona and the country overall. Just last year, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) tracked [576 anti-LGBTQ bills in the United States](#). [Research released by The Trevor Project in 2023](#) found that “86% of transgender and nonbinary youth say recent debates around anti-trans bills have negatively impacted their mental health.” Harmful rhetoric that perpetuates trans oppression and heterosexism veiled by linguistic moves such as ‘protecting the American family’ will have damaging effects on our students, staff, and faculty. And we would be remiss to not acknowledge that those most affected by this are those with multiple minoritized identities (e.g., trans women of color, queer and trans people with disabilities).

To be clear, this is not just an ideological conversation. The lives of LGBTQ+ youth and people are literally at stake at this moment in history—as they have been throughout time. And giving voice to speakers that only intend to cause harm for people within our ASU community is **simply not okay**, especially not for an institution that prides itself on “[not...whom it excludes, but...whom it includes and how they succeed.](#)”

**And to our LGBTQ+ ASU community, we see you. We are here for you. We will continue to fight for you.**

On the day of the event, we will host a counter space intended to combat the hate that will be present in that space. Please indicate in [the Google Form](#) if you would like to attend and we will pass along the information for this event. You can also email Antonio or Seren if you would like.

In solidarity,

*Members of the LGBTQ+ FSA, Rainbow Coalition, and ASU Community*

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