



COMMUNITY WITH
QUEER STUDENTS
AT CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Telling Our Truth *with* Art, Action & Spirit

Soulforce Youth Movement Report 2016-2017

Soulforce
Sabotage Christian Supremacy.

Executive Summary

Each year in our Youth movement work, we seek to balance nurturing the skills, political analysis, and spiritual well-being of Youth in hostile environments with the critical work of policy change and pressure tactics that expose the role that Christian Higher Education plays in the broader Right Wing political sphere.

This year, with the election of Donald Trump, Soulforce's work with Youth has become more relevant than any time in recent history. We are in a political moment where policy and cultural change work are not just important, but life-saving. It is critical that intersectional activism holds accountable the religious structures and institutions that got us to this moment.

In turn, our work has stayed agile with our context while remaining ever set on our mission: to end the political and religious oppression of LGBTQI people through relentless nonviolent resistance.

We understand that Christian Higher Education, and the Christian Supremacy it maintains to uphold its political agenda, is deeply responsible for the political and cultural conditions that led to the outcome of this recent election and the accompanying rise of hate crimes and violence against marginalized peoples.

For us, knowing that means fighting harder than ever to organize with and alongside Youth in these hostile contexts to resist and change Religious Right political structures, inside and out.

Our primary audiences, Queer and Trans Youth of Color in the South and students on conservative Christian campuses, experience the specter of Christian Supremacy -- which is to say the juncture of power and violence with religion -- in unique ways, and both are seeking healing and justice in their hostile contexts in a way that offers a point of junction and solidarity between the two groups.

We continue to be guided by insights from the communities we center through the communication networks we have built, such as *Kudzu*, our radical student newsletter for progressive religious Youth organizers.

"VBS has afforded me time and space to address the spiritual violence done to me as a gay man, and work to liberate my mind and heal my body...I have sharpened my understanding of Scripture and how it has been weaponized against us. I feel better equipped to repurpose the tools of the faith to fight for our collective liberation."

-21 year old student at Hope College, MI



Soulforce Youth Fellows lead their peers at Spelman College in Atlanta, GA, in creating art in solidarity with the Orlando LGBTQI community in as Soulforcers travel to host direct action against the National Religious Broadcasters.

Graduates of our Youth programs and students from the Christian schools in question also lead this work from their positions on the Soulforce board.

Over the past year we have seen our base-building grow in tandem with our political action to build politically-sharp, spiritually-resilient Youth leadership. After experimenting with new online strategies for approaching our activism, we see a greater need for a shift in our programming to further develop our digital organizing capacities as an organization. Additionally, in the next year we will be undertaking a formal strategic planning process to best understand our role in relationship to other justice organizations watching the Religious Right.

These growths are examples of meeting the moment -- and we are ready to take on the moment with 19 years of wrestling the institutions and ideologies that are fueling this moment under our belt.

This year of meeting the moment is more possible due to the enduring support thanks to our amazing members, sustaining donors, and longtime foundation partners.

With 90 new LGBTQI Youth leaders leading our work this year, and new relationships at two key Christian colleges to add to the list of 101 schools we've impacted in 19 years, we continue this work in a strong legacy of relentless nonviolent resistance that we carry into 2017 and forward on.

By the Numbers

>> **114 activists**, led by staff and/or student activists, trained on LGBTQI justice, racial justice, spiritual violence, and organizing on Christian campuses

>> **90 LGBTQI Youth leaders ages 18-24** showing up for LGBTQI justice by hosting workshops, planning actions, or organizing events for students at Christian colleges

>> **68 new students at 12 different Christian colleges** engaging in our campaigns and programs

>> **Nationally-focused direct actions in 3 states** to call on the NCAA to hold target schools accountable for gender-based discrimination

>> **Over 3,800 unique users** reached by Vacation Bible School curriculum via social media



Youth Fellows from across the Southeast gather for a House retreat in Charlotte, NC, to learn about Christian Supremacy and intersectional justice.



Some of our Vacation Bible School cohort pose with their course materials. We defang scripture by offering a power analysis in playful and compelling ways- this time, by introducing Youth to where unicorns appear in the text.

>> **22 student activists** at 11 Christian colleges joined our Student Action Network for digital mobilization and collective action

>> **260 hours** of curriculum time for Soulforce Youth via **12 different Soulforce workshops** on Christian Supremacy, activism & organizing, and spiritual reclamation

>> **6 Youth** completing **seed grant projects or internships** with Soulforce programs like Kudzu and other kinds of digital activism

>> **5 local, regional, and national news articles** highlighting our Give Back IX campaign

>> **2 new foundations** invested in our Youth and Campus programming

Timeline of Major Events

July to September

2

Partnered with legislators and local groups to support AB 1888, a California state law to strip state funding from discriminatory target schools (was pulled back into committee).

0

Developed and released 31-page Campus Organizing Toolkit for students organizing in hostile contexts

October to December

7

LGBTQI Youth of Color accepted for the second year of the Soulforce Southeast House

6

Kudzu: A Radical Student Newsletter launches

Youth-allied activists trained at "Responding to Title IX Exemptions" workshop @ Creating Change 2017 in Philadelphia, PA

Soulforce Youth Fellow launches Easter Statement of Solidarity with Trans Women of Color with 48 other faith leaders from across the US.

Direct Actions for the #GiveBackIX campaign are hosted during March Madness to call for accountability from NCAA

Youth join online Student Action Network for coordinated Christian college activist strategies

Vacation Bible School begins, training Youth in Christian Supremacy and Biblical Literacy

January to May

2

0

June to July

7

7

Basebuilding in Focus

Our base-building activities include:

- >> Providing **political and scriptural education** on Christian Supremacy and spiritual reclamation via in-person workshops, online courses, and written resources,
- >> **Sharing stories from marginalized Youth** about their experiences within Christian Supremacist environments, especially stories that promote the reclamation of LGBTQI Youth of Color and Trans Youth, and
- >> Building infrastructure and programs to **connect isolated students** to Soulforce and to one another.

Our two major efforts for basebuilding this year are **Kudzu: A Radical Student Newsletter** and **Soulforce Vacation Bible School (VBS)**. In addition, we continue to develop workshops and foster collaborations in response to current challenges faced by students, faculty, and staff in hostile Christian contexts.

Kudzu, by the numbers:

- >> **8 monthly publications** throughout the 2016-17 school year
- >> **31** original articles, stories, artworks, performances, and student interviews
- >> Submissions from LGBTQI students at **7 different Christian colleges**
- >> **7 stories of student-led direct action** challenging policies or culture
- >> **8 interviews** with student activists
- >> **7 columns** from "Reverend Sex" written by our Spiritual Strategist answering theological questions from LGBTQI students
- >> **55 new subscriptions**

VBS, by the numbers:

- >> **65 cumulative training hours**
- >> Of **9 Youth** participants, **4** are Youth of Color, **3** identify as Trans/GNC, **4** are living in the US South, and **4** are Christian college students
- >> **6 Youth** had never participated in previous Soulforce programming
- >> A Twitter and Instagram reach of **3,810 unique users**, with **93,276 impressions**
- >> **100%** of post-course surveys indicate increased knowledge in Christian Supremacy & Intersectional Justice
- >> **19 new registrations** for future VBS courses

KUDZU

Radical Student Newsletter

The purpose of Kudzu is to build and foster a national community and youth-centered news platform for student activists on Christian campuses.

This online newsletter, launched in August 2016, provides a platform for marginalized Youth to share their experiences via articles, interviews, art, poetry, and photography. Kudzu aims to offer Youth a digital space to identify with a larger LGBTQI Youth Activist movement through Soulforce, and reduce isolation in hostile environments.

Over the 2016-17 school year, 4 interns worked with staff to build new relationships with students at Christian colleges, gather and edit story submissions from Youth authors, interview students, and write regular features on their own experiences.

Excerpt from "A Queer Lamentation Week"

Reporting on direct action from Genny Schneider & Allison Schuster, Biola University.

"We mounted a wooden cross on an olive tree which hunches in front of Biola's famous Jesus mural. For Lent, this cross transformed into a memorial site for people groups in the macrocosm of the U.S. and the microcosm on our campus who have been historically victims of violence of all kinds: sexual, psychological, and physical.

Each week after Ash Wednesday (March 1, 2017), a group of us would gather around the memorial to mourn, pray and confess how we as American and Christian communities have failed these people over and over and over again. Our weeks unfolded accordingly as we lamented Black lives, Immigrant lives, Native American lives and Queer lives.

Right before Holy Week, there was going to be a Muslim and refugee lives memorial, but in the days following the initial resurrection of the Queer lives memorial, the pride flag that we had draped over the cross was stolen..."

(Read more at kudzunewsletter.tumblr.com.)



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Soulforce Vacation Bible School (VBS) is a new online program emerging from an need to find innovative ways to build resiliency and leadership in affected Youth communities. Soulforce Youth Programs staff created an online course that incorporates liberatory Bible study, political analysis, and ethics development into curriculum directed toward the leadership development and mental health of LGBTQI Youth.

Over 4 weeks, Vacation Bible School convened Youth to participate in twice-per-week online workshops (7 total) in topics concerning Biblical Literacy, Christian Supremacy, and Spiritual Resiliency. Justice-oriented LGBTQI Youth explored topics like the connections between transphobia and patriarchy, "Biblical marriage", and gender diversity in nature (and in the Bible).

Thus, **Youth come away with new skills in navigating extremely difficult political and faith-based issues** that are hard for LGBTQI people of any age to confront and challenge.

Additionally, we strategically emphasized the use of digital media to expand the reach of our curriculum beyond the Youth present on the physical call by "live tweeting" content during our courses and engaging with followers online while presenting material.

We predict that future **online learning spaces will continue to foster new relationships with Youth** – especially Youth of Color, Youth in the U.S. South, and Trans/GNC Youth.

SESSION TOPICS AND DATES

Our Approach to the Bible
Unicorn | July 6th

Queer Sexualities
Black Swan | July 11th

Community & Chosen
Family
Bee | July 13th

The Birds and the Bees
Komodo Dragon | July 18th

Gender Expression
Emperor Penguin | July 20th

Pleasure & Promiscuity
Walrus | July 25th

Outro
July 27th

VBS sessions paired non-normative scriptural lessons with stories of animals that defy "natural" ideas of gender/sexuality promulgated by the Religious Right.

Other Base Building endeavors this year include:

Student Action Network

The Student Action Network is a network of student organizers at Christian colleges & universities committed to pushing back against institutional violence across campuses. This community works in tandem with Kudzu and, unlike other base-building activities, is more intentionally geared toward direct action and policy change.

The Student Action Network is organized via Facebook with **22 members**, both current students and alumni, from **11 target schools**. Youth Programs staff and Kudzu interns post discussion questions, link to Kudzu publications and organizing resources for LGBTQI Youth in Christian contexts, and promote information-sharing with other Youth about what is happening on other Christian campuses.

Collaborations

Alongside our continued collaboration with **Campus Pride** on the Give Back IX campaign (see Policy Work in Focus), we worked with new organizations this year to increase capacity to do Youth-focused justice work.

>> Supported the **North Carolina Queer Troublemakers**, a network of LGBTQI Youth of Color in North Carolina who organize under Black Lives Matter, by jointly publishing a statement during Holy Week calling on faith communities to act in solidarity with Trans Youth and Women of Color

>> Partnered with the **Spelman College Women's Center of Atlanta** to bring a Traveling Altar of Resistance and offer a Christian Supremacy workshop in February

>> Teamed up with a **LGBTQ civil rights law practice** to develop curriculum for a workshop on opposing Title IX exemptions at Christian colleges

"It is easy to feel trapped and alone when the number of people visibly working for justice at your school can be counted on one hand, but for me, Kudzu is the opportunity to pause and acknowledge just how many hands there are across the nation, each working towards the same goals."

-Kudzu Student Newsletter contributor

Examples of This Year's Workshops

>> Responding to Title IX Exemptions on Christian Campuses

>> LGBTQI Resistance on Christian College Campuses

>> Christian Supremacy 101 for Queer and Trans Youth of Color

Policy Advocacy in Focus

Over the past year, our policy work has had to bend and shift to meet the political climate. The legal and cultural interpretation of Title IX, and thereby the lives of directly-affected Youth, has been at the center of politics at the Department of Education.

As Trump has taken office, two Christian Right leaders, Betsy DeVos and Jerry Falwell, Jr., have been invited to take positions in governmental oversight of education. These figureheads have promised to roll back the federal Title IX policy protecting LGBTQI people and Women in universities. It is not a surprise that they are both products of the Christian universities that have historically expelled pregnant women and LGBTQI students, essentially writing the book on Title IX exemptions.

We continue to show solidarity with the challenges of being LGBTQI or a woman on these Christian campuses but also intervene in the relationship between Christian higher education, the gutting of Title IX, and the broader “religious exemption” model fueling a rash of anti-woman and anti-LGBTQI laws at the state and federal levels.

This year we focused our Give Back IX campaign by calling on the NCAA to defend justice by pressuring target schools to change their anti-LGBTQI policies.

Why target the NCAA?

The NCAA continues to allow religious schools with discriminatory policies to be a part of this prestigious body which allows them publicity and revenue while implementing extreme ideologies.

Meanwhile, the NBA and NFL, the largest grossing professional sports leagues, have found their way, quite controversially, into the politics of trans rights in states with anti-trans “bathroom bills”. Those bills are crafted, funded, and culturally promoted through the channels of Christian higher education and the lawyers and think-tanks they produce.

During in closed-doors talks with allied NCAA staffers, we have been advised:

>> **We have to keep up the public pressure.** They will go where we want them to, but they won't lead.

>> **If schools stop playing each other,** especially where it affects the NCAA's bottom line, the NCAA will have to act.

>> **The NCAA will publicly reaffirm their public commitments to trans safety and inclusion,** both as a result of the sign-on letter delivered the day after our Liberty University action, and as a result of the “repeal” of HB2.

#GIVEBACKIX

Our goals in the Give Back IX campaign this year:

- >> Push the NCAA to finally make a statement about the discriminatory schools within its ranks and where it stands on Title IX,
- >> Challenge Christian schools to end their misogyny, transmisogyny, transphobia, and homophobia by airing the less mainstream aspects of their institutions,
- >> Intervene with the power of first-person stories in the “religious exemption” debates that are rolling back reproductive health access, public accommodations, and other protections,
- >> Build teams of student activists that are open to greater national coordination to address gender justice in education at the federal level via direct action and first-person storytelling.

Bringing the Pressure to the NCAA

In April 2016, one month after receiving our sign-on letter in conjunction with Campus Pride calling for Shame List schools to be pulled from the sports association, the NCAA updated their questionnaire for championship bidding schools to include questions about the bidding school's trans-inclusive policies and whether the school has applied for a Title IX waiver.

We can count this as a major win for our campaign, but to stop there would be a capitulation on our goals: **to cause major a financial disincentive for any school that uses religion to legally discriminate against marginalized people.** The NCAA has penalized target schools, but they have not yet divested from them with their actions. Campaign communications with NCAA staffers leads us to believe that there is more pushing to be done, but that **further gains from NCAA are possible if we continue to push.**



Sharable images on Soulforce social media like this one reached 3,500 viewers on average.

Direct Action: Give Back IX

Give Back IX included 3 direct actions to target the NCAA: Liberty University's Women's Basketball Big South Semi-Finals (March 9), Women's Basketball Final Four Championship in Dallas, TX, (April 2), and Pomona-Pitzer's annual Track and Field Invitational (April 8).

We worked with 5 student leaders at Liberty University and 2 student leaders at Pomona-Pitzer to shape and lead the actions at the games, such as staking out banner drops and working as the "film crew", a safer way for them to engage on their hostile campus. Soulforce Youth staff were the leaders of these actions. Because of the high risk of the Final Four action (held at the American Airlines stadium, unaffiliated with a university), non-Youth staff led this disruption.

During each direct action, a banner calling on the NCAA for "gender justice on Christian campuses" would be raised during the conference events, sometimes disrupting the game from the stands. In the case of the Liberty and Dallas games, Soulforcers had their banners confiscated by NCAA staffers or police officers and were asked to leave.



Left: Soulforcers spanning three generations hold a banner in front of Liberty's basketball stadium. Right: NCAA officials come to confiscate a banner from Soulforcers. (Captured by an allied Liberty student.)

Power in Stories

Along with pressuring the NCAA first-hand, our Give Back IX actions raised the public profile of our campaign. We used that awareness to invite students to share their stories from campus life.

We received 9 stories from students and recent alumni, and one story from a former staff member of a Christian school. We are now using to shape our narrative using Teen Vogue, Huffington Post, and OutSports as our platforms.

We are bridging from calling on the NCAA to have our backs and raising consciousness of the issue at the heart of this - **that the religious schools that are responsible for the regressive religious liberty paradigm are getting a pass from the NCAA.** We hope to organize teams and athletic departments at more friendly schools to refuse to play schools like Liberty next academic year.

During the actions, we used targeted Facebook advertising for our video-based reporting, earned media, and campaign memes to reach students on the religious schools that were most relevant (playing in the conference, geographic proximity) to the action. We included women's and trans issues as metrics in order to more precisely reach the folks we center in our campaign.

The average boosted post reached approximately 3,500 people with a range of 1,394 to 5,508. We also worked in concert with the hashtags and messaging of the state-based campaigns fighting the bathroom bills in North Carolina and Texas to succeed within the algorithms of Facebook trends, to reach more people and boost local activism. That outreach directly resulted in **3 people submitting their campus experiences via our storytelling feature** on the campaign page. Also, **1 student from an affirming school in the same conference signed on to the Liberty** challenge next school year because she resents that her field hockey team has to play at a school defined by bigotry.

“Students should be able to focus on their academics and grow into the adults they want to be without having politics constantly looming above our heads. Liberty should value God and its students over anything else--valuing people is far more important than valuing politics.”

-21 year old Queer Liberty student, participant in Give Back IX actions

Building a Stronger Narrative in Focus

Our social media messaging has worked in tandem with our news coverage to increase awareness of Title IX rollbacks and what that means for LGBTQI people and women on campus. The buzz of the Final Four action secured a **Huffington Post contributor status** for Soulforce, which is an outcome with long term positive effects.

We are charting a very intentional evolution for this narrative from setting the terms of the debate and utilizing current events to create a bigger footprint for our campaign to, ultimately, diving deeper on the religious and privatization of discrimination issues:

Step 1: Point out the power of the NCAA and call for better solidarity.
See: [Group calls for NCAA action against "Title IX attack"](#), WSET TV, March 13, 2017.

Step 2: Point out how the NCAA finds itself in the middle of the bathroom bill debates and emphasize their heightened responsibility; provide encouragement as we wait to see how their actions in North Carolina play out
See: [Women's Final Four in Texas illuminates another potential bathroom bill quandary for NCAA](#), USA Today, March 31, 2017

Step 3: Offer a public witness that heals and inspires folks who are isolated on campus; show the public that our campaign with the NCAA will not go away
See: [Pro-trans protesters detained & ejected from NCAA Women's Final Four](#), LGBTQ Nation, April, 3, 2017

Step 4: Move from creating space for the NCAA to do right by us in the language of "encouragement and hope", toward holding the organization culpable for being a part of a culture that allows for bathroom bills
See: [The NCAA's Own House Is A Mess For Queer And Trans People](#), Huffington Post, April 5, 2017

Step 5: Re-center the dialogue, now that the NCAA has capitulated, on student experiences and the greater political and infrastructural question of Christian Higher Ed is operating in the federal legal sphere
See: [NCAA is complicit with schools discriminating against LGBTQI athletes](#), OutSports, April 5, 2017

Group calls for NCAA action against "Title IX attack"

by Valencia Jones | Monday, March 13th 2017



(WSET)

A group is calling for the NCAA to take direct action against what they call Trump Administration attacks against Title IX.

Local press coverage of our GiveBackIX action in Lynchburg, VA

"NCAA, do you call your members to higher standards on behalf of all students whose rights, dignity, and worth have been threatened? Or is fair play only for some?"
 -OutSports, 2017

Cumulatively, the 5 articles written about/for the Give Back IX campaign received 317 shares on social media.

Two videos: "We've Got Your Back with the Give Back IX Campaign" and "Why We Resist: Give Back IX Shows How Direct Action Works, Spring 2017".

FACT:
 There are over 100 NCAA schools with anti-LGBTQI policies.



"It's a good thing we are not so easily deterred here at Soulforce."

Our videos on our Give Back IX action have together received over 150 unique views on Youtube.

Overall Evaluation & Impact

Accomplishment

Offering resources, accompaniment, and leadership development to Youth resisting fundamentalism in their own contexts

Developed greater Youth community around Vacation Bible School and Kudzu by crafting new curriculum on Christian Supremacy and intersectional justice

Pressure built for NCAA to change their public relationship to discrimination against LGBTQI Youth via 3 direct actions with 7 student

Broadcasted new narratives of resistance to Title IX exemptions and anti-LGBTQI discrimination at Christian colleges and beyond, for on- and off-campus audiences

Impact

Campus Organizing Toolkit; relationships forged with 7 students or groups doing direct action on their campuses; 6 internships/seed grants taken with Youth

Received 93,276 unique views of content on social media; 55 new subscribers to the campus news list

Campaign media reaching approximately 10,500 unique viewers on social media; off-record support from allied NCAA staffers

7 articles about Give Back IX campaign released; original pieces about Youth experiences on Christian colleges published via Kudzu

What's Now Possible

Expanding seed grant program to build new relationships with Youth; continuing political and spiritual resources based on assessed needs of LGBTQI Youth

Hosting more online workshop space and conducting more digital organizing for Youth on Christian Supremacy and Biblical Literacy

New and creative campaign approaches that focuses on specific target schools (Liberty and Brigham Young) and maximizes our new messaging reach

Continue relationship building with journalists to broadcast political realities of Youth; build autonomous spaces to share stories of LGBTQI Youth in hostile contexts

“...It is past time for our dignity to be acknowledged.
We demand more than mere tolerance.

It is as a unified body that we have been silenced in our suffering, and it is together that we will be reckoned with. We are not alone, nor are we isolated in our struggle. Our liberation is interconnected. Our stories are inextricably bound. Our lives are irreplaceably valuable. Our hope is incorruptible.

We are more than wanted; **everyone is needed.**”

-Kudzu Student Editor, 21, TN

We know that our strategies in a Trump era must shift with the political reality that government structures are not tilted in our favor. Our communities are overwhelmed by fear from the inundation of violence faced in this current political climate. At the same time, public protests and other forms of cultural and political resistance across all issues are arguably their highest in recent history.

We believe that Soulforce has never been more relevant, and that this moment is ripe for Soulforce to focus our work on culture shift on campuses and beyond.

Our Youth report experiencing direct aggression from the opposition, burnout, hopelessness, fear, and they desire more political and spiritual accompaniment. In order to meet the needs of LGBTQI Youth and Youth of Color organizing in this hostile climate Soulforce plans to ramp up our base-building endeavors by developing content and programming that uses knowledge on Christian Supremacy and spiritual reclamation work to dispel fear and instill power.

We are positioning Soulforce to:

- >> Build an organization that is strategically positioned for the political climates that will emerge after the elections 2018 and 2020 with a base of LGBTQI Youth who are prepared and unafraid to combat religious-based bigotry, and
- >> Engage in strategic relationship building with other organizations to increase our collective capacity in pushing back against religious violence.

Expense Report

Salary, Taxes & Benefits	\$78,128	Printing	\$604
Housing	\$2,435	Shipping/Postage	\$221
Supplies	\$7,887	Tickets	\$6,830
Food	\$421	Transportation	\$3,193
Advertising	\$208	Youth Stipends	\$2,860
Contract Labor (PR)	\$500	Overhead (3%)	\$3,099
Transportation	\$3,193		
Total.....			\$106,387

Narrative

We were excited to welcome two new funders to our granting community thanks to rapid response requests to support the Give Back IX campaign. Salaries continue to be the largest share of the budget because this field of work, given the confidentiality, security, and risk factors, is deeply relational. All of our staff members contribute to the success of our youth and campus work - some provide basebuilding, others provide research and theological resources, and together we implement direct action campaigns and social media campaigns to achieve our aims.

We did not have a Beyond Equality Ride bus on tour this year - a significant housing and transportation cost when we do host this event - so that we have the capacity to conduct in-depth research to investigate the role that Christian Higher Education plays in state-level legal battles surrounding the religious liberty concept.

What's Next

Give Back IX

Using social media memes and letters to athletic directors, we will be presenting the option to “friendly” schools that they have the right to refuse to play on certain campuses or to play certain teams. We will focus on building relationships and nurturing divestment with schools that play our two primary target campuses of out-sized political significance: Liberty University and Brigham Young University.

We will continue exposing target schools' problematic policies by working to place student stories on popular media sites, updating the Shame List (Campus Pride's list of the most egregious schools), and by distributing our Title IX and Religious Liberty resource (below).

We will focus on outreach to Youth at hostile schools in states with bathroom bills and NCAA championship bids to capture their stories, resource student activists, and invite them into relationship with Soulforce.

Title IX and Religious Liberty Briefing

We are developing a resource that examines the political, cultural, and ideological connections between religious liberty laws and Title IX exemptions. This resource will detail the political maneuvers of the Religious Right, while also helping LGBTQI students and their allies in hostile contexts prepare confident arguments and talking points in their own campus activism.

Outcomes include distribution to 20 target campuses and a workshop offered online in conjunction with the resource.

Trans Theological Resource

Informed by the current attack on all Trans people (and especially Youth), this resource will attend to political and spiritual violence done against Trans people through weaponizing the Bible to make moral arguments against Trans rights. We will disseminate this resource through in-person gatherings and online spaces. We will target the distribution of this resource to target campuses through relationships developed with faculty, staff, and students, as well as the wider community.

Digital Organizing: Art, Action, and Spirit

Two of VBS's greatest successes for the infrastructure of our organization are the opportunity to meet new Youth, and the development of a larger social media presence through our online outreach and resource dissemination. We plan to continue creating on-going digital gathering spaces where activists can gather and learn critical information about the ways Christian Supremacy operates in our legal systems and wider culture.



Soulforce works to end the political and religious oppression of all LGBTQI people. Through a practice of relentless, nonviolent resistance, we focus on spiritual healing, radical political analysis, and strategic direct action.

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