

## Snapshot Series: LGBTQI+ Lived Reality in Pittsburgh & Pennsylvania

### How safe is Pittsburgh for LGBTQI+ individuals?

The city of Pittsburgh is a safer, more accepting place for LGBTQI+ individuals than Philadelphia, the state of Pennsylvania, and the United States in general, according to the most recent results of the **F&M Global Barometers LGBTQI+ Perception Index (GBPI)**.

Based on responses from 76 LGBTQI+ Pittsburghers, the city scored an average of 76%, which is five points higher than the state and six points higher than the country. Like Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and the United States, the survey's **Q2: Acceptance** was the lowest-scoring indicator in Pittsburgh.

However, in comparison to other parts of the state and the country, Pittsburgh scored four points higher on **Q2: Acceptance**, suggesting it is a more accepting place. Pittsburgh also scored much higher than Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and the United States overall on **Q3: Fear of Police**. Only six other states reported **Q3: Fear of Police** as the highest scoring question; the majority of states reported **Q5: Safety in Gathering** as the highest.

Created by the F&M Global Barometers in partnership with the Council for Global Equality, the GBPI is a **groundbreaking survey** that gauges the lived human rights reality of the global LGBTQI+ community. Launched on the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots in June 2022, the GBPI asked six questions on safety, acceptance, fear, and discrimination. It was available in four languages: Arabic, English, French and Spanish. Based on the responses, each country or state is assigned a letter grade (A-F) and assessed on a scale of 0-100% where A (100%) is the highest and F (0%) is the lowest.

### GBPI (2022) Results

Pittsburgh	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	United States
Q1 (Safety) 76%	Q1 (Safety) 73%	Q1 (Safety) 71%	Q1 (Safety) 71%
Q2 (Acceptance) 70%	Q2 (Acceptance) 66%	Q2 (Acceptance) 66%	Q2 (Acceptance) 66%
Q3 (Fear of Police) 79%	Q3 (Fear of Police) 71%	Q3 (Fear of Police) 72%	Q3 (Fear of Police) 71%
Q4 (Violence) 77%	Q4 (Violence) 69%	Q4 (Violence) 69%	Q4 (Violence) 69%
Q5 (Safety in Gathering) 75%	Q5 (Safety in Gathering) 77%	Q5 (Safety in Gathering) 75%	Q5 (Safety in Gathering) 74%
Q6 (Discrimination) 77%	Q6 (Discrimination) 73%	Q6 (Discrimination) 72%	Q6 (Discrimination) 72%
Overall Score N= 76 76%	Overall Score N= 243 72%	Overall Score N= 763 71%	Overall Score N= 14,046 70%

NB: Not all respondents answered every question, and scores were rounded up to the nearest whole number.

"I personally feel fairly safe most of the time, but I also have the privilege of passing as straight often and choosing to be open with who I am when I feel safe. I fear that there has been a lot of legislation targeting the LGBTQ community recently. Though it mostly targets Trans people, I fear that it is an attack on and endangers all of us."

"I feel pretty safe living in my area but I do worry, at times, that the climate could shift back to an unfriendly, over fake Christian mentality. I also struggle with being gay to this day."

"The world is transphobic. The hardest part is that there aren't any safe spaces to be. Not even online. You get banned from Tinder and even Grindr just for being trans. Trans people aren't allowed to exist. And we are seen as fetishes rather than humans. It is terrifying to be trans in the United States."

## The State of LGBTQI+ Legislation in Pennsylvania

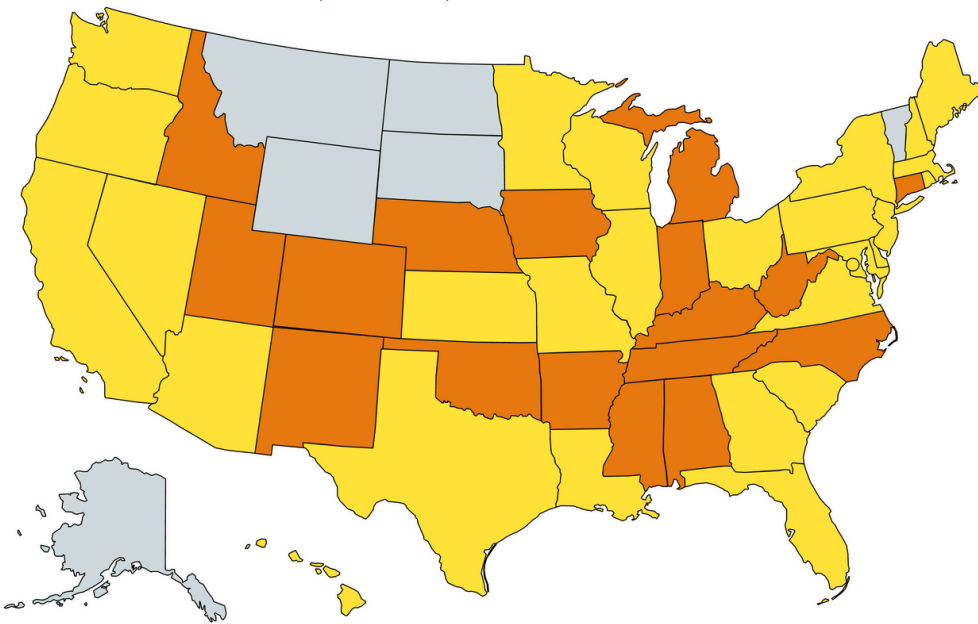
The GBPI results in both Pittsburgh and statewide largely mirror the legislative reality in Pennsylvania. According to the Movement Advancement Project, Pennsylvania only scores a “Fair.” While LGBTQI+ Pennsylvanians are protected from employment discrimination through federal legislation, only 4 out of 67 counties prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity [1]. The state has yet to pass the Fairness Act, which would protect sexual orientation and gender identity minorities from discrimination in employment, housing, education, and public accommodations. Passed in the House, the bill is now in the Senate [2].

Pennsylvania also has yet to introduce any legislation to ban “panic defenses,” which enable defendants to use someone’s real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity as a way to evade criminal responsibility and claim self-defense; to implement LGBTQI+ inclusive curriculum; or to protect LGBTQI+ students from bullying [3].

In recent years, like the rest of the country, Pennsylvania has seen an uptick in anti-LGBTQI+ rhetoric and proposed legislation. As of April 2024, four anti-LGBTQI+ bills are sitting in the House. These bills would impose barriers on trans-affirming healthcare and expression, ban transgender athletes from sports in public education institutions, and censor instruction in sexual orientation and gender identity for K-5th grade [4]. While Gov. Tom Wolf vetoed a bill that would have banned transgender athletes from playing sports [5], two school districts in Lancaster County enacted policies that require transgender students to adhere to their sex assigned at birth when playing sports or using bathrooms [6] [7]. Given both the proposed and passed measures, it is perhaps unsurprising that Q2, which asks how accepted participants feel, is the lowest-scoring question in both Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania overall.

To see greater improvements in LGBTQI+ individuals’ sense of safety and acceptance, Pennsylvania lawmakers must codify additional LGBTQI+ discrimination protections, reject anti-LGBTQI+ rhetoric and laws designed to scapegoat transgender individuals, and support inclusive educational programming.

## GBPI (2022) United States Results



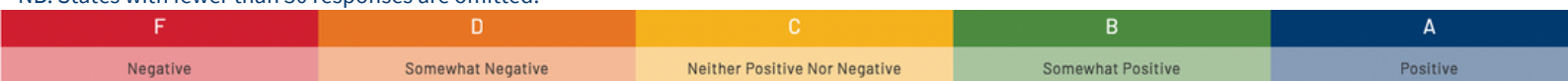
### Highest Scoring States

- 77% Hawaii
- 75% Maine
- 75% Massachusetts
- 72% New Hampshire
- 72% Kansas

### Lowest Scoring States

- 63% Idaho
- 67% New Mexico
- 67% Oklahoma
- 67% Tennessee
- 67% Utah

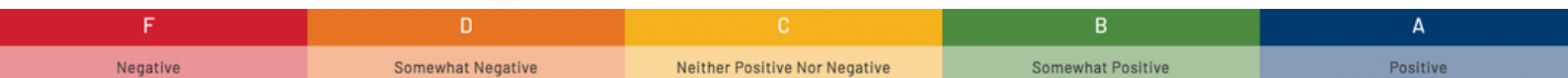
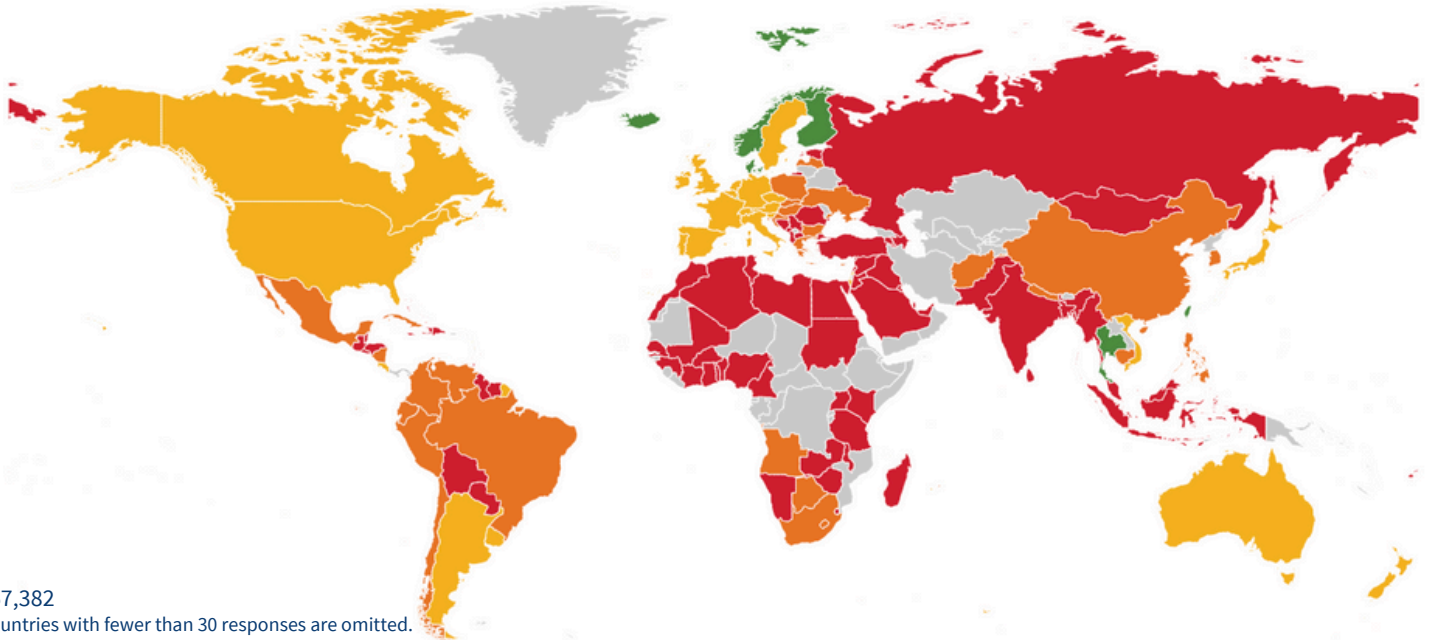
N= 14,046  
 NB: States with fewer than 30 responses are omitted.









## Works Cited

- [1] “Pennsylvania’s LGBTQ Policy Tally,” Pennsylvania’s Equality Profile, Movement Advancement Project, accessed April 15, 2024, [https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/profile\\_state/PA](https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/profile_state/PA).
- [2] “HB300-PA Fairness Act,” 2023-2024 House Bill 300 Bill Page, ACLU Pennsylvania, accessed April 15, 2024, <https://www.aclupa.org/en/legislation/hb-300-pa-fairness-act>.
- [3] “Pennsylvania’s LGBTQ+ Laws and Policies,” Pennsylvania’s Equality Profile, Movement Advancement Project, accessed April 15, 2024, [https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/profile\\_state/PA](https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/profile_state/PA).
- [4] “Mapping Attacks on LGBTQ Rights in U.S. State Legislatures in 2024,” Issues: LGBTQ Rights, ACLU, accessed April 15, 2024, <https://www.aclu.org/legislative-attacks-on-lgbtq-rights-2024?state=PA&impact=>.
- [5] “Wolf Vetoes Bills on Poll Watchers, Transgender Athletes,” *Associated Press News*, July 8, 2022 <https://apnews.com/article/education-pennsylvania-legislature-gender-identity-937f2bd62670b4ba717fe407e2c669a3>.
- [6] Maggie Mancini, “Lancaster County school district adopts athletic policy restricting trans students in sports,” *Philly Voice*, July 13, 2022, <https://www.phillyvoice.com/hempfield-school-district-lancaster-county-transgender-student-athletes-policy/>.
- [7] Ed Mahon, “‘Biological sex’ policy to begin this month in Eastern Lancaster County,” *WITF.org*, August 13, 2019, <https://www.witf.org/2019/08/13/biological-sex-policy-to-begin-this-month-in-eastern-lancaster-county/>.

## GBPI (2022) Global Results



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