

Nancy Mace, now targeting transgender lawmaker, called herself 'pro-transgender rights' in 2023

By [Andrew Kaczynski](#), CNN

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Mace defends attempt to ban transgender lawmaker from using women's restroom

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(CNN) — Republican Rep. Nancy Mace as recently as last year called herself “pro-transgender rights” and said she supported children exploring gender identities with different hairstyles, clothing and preferred pronouns, a stark contrast to more recent comments that have put her in the national spotlight.

Last week, the South Carolina Republican introduced a resolution to amend the rules of the US House of Representatives to ban transgender women from using women’s restrooms at the Capitol and filed broader legislation that would apply to every federal building and federally funded school.

The resolution came in direct response to the election of Democratic Rep.-elect Sarah McBride of Delaware, the first out transgender person elected to Congress.

In hundreds of tweets over the last week, Mace has used a flood of anti-transgender rhetoric, including repeatedly calling transgender people “mentally ill,” which is a stark — and unexplained — departure from her past positioning as a self-proclaimed pro-LGBTQ Republican.

In July 2023, Mace described herself as “pro-transgender rights” and voiced support for children exploring their identities, such as by changing pronouns, hairstyles or clothing.

“If they wanna take on a different pronoun or a different gender identity or grow their hair out, or wear a dress or wear pants, or do those things as a minor — those are all things that I think most people would support. Be who you want to be, but don’t make permanent changes as a child,” Mace said in an interview last year.

Mace made the comments in the context of saying she opposed gender-affirming care for minors.

“They may decide as an adult, ‘Hey, instead of being Johnny, I want to be Jill’ — that’s OK,” she said. “But let them figure that out and make that decision when they can consent.”

It’s hard to pinpoint a clear through line for when Mace shifted her tone to be so harshly anti-

transgender. Just a month after describing herself as “pro-transgender rights” and supporting children exploring their identities, Mace spoke out against transgender women competing in women’s sports. While the shift might not necessarily be contradictory in policy, it represented a departure in tone, moving from seemingly supportive and inclusive language to critical rhetoric.

In texts with CNN, Mace reiterated her past support for LGBTQ rights, including voting for same-sex marriage. She clarified that while she has no issue with individuals dressing as they choose or using preferred pronouns, she opposes transgender women accessing women’s private spaces, citing concerns about protecting women and girls. Mace, however, also described transgender individuals as needing to “seek help.”

“Voted for gay marriage twice. Would do it again. Have supported pro LGBTQ legislation. Draw the line at women being forced to undress in front of men or men using our bathrooms or any private spaces,” Mace told CNN.

Mace has in the past credited her personal connections to LGBTQ individuals for shaping her inclusive rhetoric

In 2021, she co-sponsored the Fairness for All Act, which aimed to ban discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation while carving out exemptions for religious institutions.

“I strongly support LGBTQ rights and equality,” she said at the time. “No one should be discriminated against. ... I have friends and family that identify as LGBTQ. Understanding how they feel and how they’ve been treated is important. Having been around gay, lesbian and transgender people has informed my opinion over my lifetime.”

House Speaker Mike Johnson said last week there is a policy throughout the Capitol complex that effectively bans transgender women from women’s restrooms and other female-designated spaces in the Capitol.

“All single-sex facilities in the Capitol and House Office Buildings — such as restrooms, changing rooms, and locker rooms — are reserved for individuals of that biological sex,” the Louisiana Republican said in a statement.

He did not outline how the policy would be enforced but noted that unisex restrooms are available throughout the Capitol.

McBride responded on social media, “I’m not here to fight about bathrooms. I’m here to fight for Delawareans and to bring down costs facing families. Like all members, I will follow the rules as outlined by Speaker Johnson, even if I disagree with them.”

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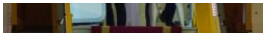
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