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Hobbs Doubles Down On Executive Orders For LGBTQ Community

June 28, 2023



***By Daniel Stefanski* |**

Unwilling to work with the Arizona State Legislature, Governor Katie Hobbs has again chosen to exercise unilateral power in the pursuit of her progressive plans.

On Tuesday, Governor Katie Hobbs announced that she signed two Executive Orders to “restore rights and protect LGBTQ+ Arizonans.” According to Hobbs’ Office, the Orders “ensure the state employee health care plan covers medically-necessary gender-affirming surgery” and bar “state agencies from funding, promoting, or supporting conversion therapy against LGBTQ+ Arizonans.”

In a press release, the governor said, “Our LGBTQ+ community should never have to face hate and discrimination, and I will do everything in my power to fight for full

equality. The State is leading by example on this issue, and we will continue working until Arizona is a place where every individual can participate equally in our economy and our workforce without fear of discrimination or exclusion."

Legislative Republicans, already **working through** their options for addressing Hobbs' recent Executive Order on abortion, were quick to react. Arizona Senate President Warren Petersen did not mince his words in response to the state's chief executive's latest action, tweeting, "Instead of helping struggling AZ families plagued by inflation, the governor just issued an order for taxpayers to cover the cost of elective, sex reassignment surgeries. This illegal, out of touch, unprecedented overreach did not receive proper JLBC review as required by law."

The Arizona Senate Republicans Caucus echoed its leader, writing, "Hobbs continues to show just how tone deaf she is with the majority of hard-working Arizonans. Her weak leadership abilities are on full display with every executive order and ignorant veto she drops."

The Center for Arizona Policy immediately issued a statement to call Hobbs' action a "dangerous power grab," stating, "Governor Katie Hobbs should have run for the Arizona Legislature if she wanted to make law. Arizona lawmakers who represent Arizonans throughout the state are tasked with passing new laws, not the Governor. This power grab is not only partisan, but it is unwise and dangerous. What she calls "conversion therapy" amounts to basic counseling for those struggling with their gender. It is likely unconstitutional to tell therapists what they can say and citizens what therapy they can seek. It is also unconscionable to block coverage for counseling and health services sought by state employees and their dependents."

The pro-life, pro-family organization added, "Hobbs also appears to be encouraging irreversible and experimental sex-change surgeries and drug therapies at a time when European countries are increasingly pulling back because of the damage done to so many. We also continue to see more and more people detransition after regretting the permanent effects of such drug therapies and surgeries."

Many Democrats around the state cheered on the governor's move, including Representative Nancy Gutierrez, who tweeted, "I was happy to be there today and witness these Executive Orders by Governor Hobbs! Our community will get the care

they desire and be able to use their health insurance. I'm also grateful that no other child will subjected to harmful conversion therapy."

Arizona Republicans now find themselves facing a Democrat governor who is growing increasingly bolder about pushing the bounds of her constitutionally stipulated authority. Just two months ago, Hobbs went through what some might consider as the lowest moments of her fledgling administration, **vetoing** a wildly popular (and overwhelmingly) bipartisan "Tamale Bill," **signing** a state budget that allowed Republicans to protect key priorities (such as the ESA program), and **losing** her chief of staff.

However, the events of the past calendar week have seemed to buoy the governor's previously diminishing political capital, starting with her **Executive Order** to "centralize all abortion-related prosecutions under the Attorney General." On Monday, after taking the weekend to contemplate a plan of response, Senator Jake Hoffman, the Chairman of the Committee on Director Nominations, **announced** that he was cancelling Tuesday's hearing and requested a meeting with the Hobbs' administration "to discuss any additional overreach (her) office intends to take requiring complicity from Executive Directors."

After a report circulated that this meeting was "not likely" to occur, Senator T.J. Shope tweeted, "Oh…so much for that Open Door Policy we've heard about over and over again. I guess Governor Hobbs would rather fight it out in an adversarial court setting as opposed to an adult conversation in an office setting."

Not to be forgotten – legislative Republicans and Governor Hobbs recently were **battling** over a Prop 400 solution – a fight that has been pushed to the rear-view mirror with her calculated Executive Orders at the end of this month.

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