

COMMUNITY

“We Will Overcome This”: Trans Lawyer Jillian Weiss Has Hope Amid the Backlash

The renowned trans lawyer discusses the multi-pronged nature of trans resistance and how we've misled our youth.



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Credit: August Davidson

Generational gaps impact society at large, but those shortchanging LGBTQ+ communities cut deeper. TransGenerational, a series of interviews with trans elders from around the nation, aims to begin mending this gap through highlighting the power of inter-generational connections. [Read more from the project here.](#)

Attorney Jillian Weiss is confident that our trans community will overcome this current, highly orchestrated onslaught of legislative terror. As a lawyer with decades of experience fighting for trans rights with organizations like Lambda Legal and Trans Legal Defense & Education Fund, her confidence is more than hollow optimism; rather, it is rooted in hard-won know-how. That is the promise of trans eldership: hope that has survived to testify.

In her long career, Jillian has seen it all. When she came out in 1998, she lost family, friends, and her job as a lawyer at a small firm. Since then, she has battled employment discrimination against trans people as a civil rights attorney and crafted policy strategies on boards for organizations like Lambda Legal and as the former head of the Trans Legal Defense & Education Fund. She now leads her own firm to defend trans people against workplace discrimination.

Jill is the legal defender so many of us never had. She will walk through walls to protect our people. I'm a little biased because she is also my best friend. We met in 2015 when I interviewed her about legal considerations of gender-nonconforming style in the workplace. (The article ran in [*dapperQ*](#), a digital queer fashion magazine I founded but no longer own).

We hit it off when Jill reached out a few years later for advice on how to “butch up” her style, and now we speak almost daily.

This conversation felt like an extension of so many in which we discuss being of service to the community, our growing chorus of allies, and why we will ultimately win.

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