

# Ex-GOP Gov Candidate Calls For ‘Firing Squad’ For Trans Rights Supporters, Political Foes

- by Ashton Pittman
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Robert Foster, a former Mississippi House lawmaker who lost a 2019 bid for governor, is using his social-media platform to call for the execution of political foes who support the rights of transgender people.

“Some of y’all still want to try and find political compromise with those that want to groom our school aged children and pretend men are women, etc,” the former Republican representative from Hernando, Miss., [wrote in a Thursday night tweet](#). “I think they need to be lined up against (a) wall before a firing squad to be sent to an early judgment.”

Foster, who runs Cedar Hill Farm, an agritourism business in DeSoto County, Miss., served as a state representative from 2016 until 2020, where he [authored the state’s current death penalty law in 2017](#), allowing for executions by gas chamber, electrocution and firing squad. He placed third in the 2019 Republican primary for governor after making national headlines for [refusing to allow women journalists to ride along in his truck on the campaign trail](#) despite allowing male journalists to do so.

Despite winning less than 18% of the GOP primary vote, Foster’s farm venue has become a prime destination for Republicans since 2019, with GOP officials like [U.S. Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith](#), [U.S. House Rep. Trent Kelly](#) and [House Speaker Philip Gunn](#) attending fundraisers and other events on the property.

In 2020, the Hernando Main Street Chamber of Commerce gave him its “[Spirit of Main Street](#)” award even as he spent much of the pandemic era tweeting COVID-19 and anti-vaccine conspiracy theories.

The Mississippi Free Press requested an interview with Foster about Thursday’s tweet, but he sent a message declining the invitation.

“I said what I said,” he wrote, adding to what he had tweeted. “The law should be changed so that anyone trying to sexually groom children and/or advocating to put men pretending to be women in locker rooms and bathrooms with young women should receive the death penalty by firing squad.”

## ‘The Fascist Force Is Strong With This One’

On Thursday night, Jackson attorney Spencer Ritchie, who served as the executive director of the Mississippi Republican Party from 2014 to 2017 and is now on the Mississippi Ethics Commission, criticized Foster’s tweet.

“[The fascist force is strong with this one](#),” Ritchie wrote, quote-tweeting Foster.

“Spineless establishment RINOs like you have conceded every fight with the Communists when you held power,” [Foster replied](#). “Ya’ll ‘Conservatives’ haven’t actually conserved anything. Now the Godless have power and they are destroying our country. Soon we will have to deal with this directly.”

After another Twitter user sarcastically accused Foster of “casting judgment like a true Christian,” the former lawmaker offered a clarification.

“God will judge them. Just think they need to be sent to an early judgment,” the [Hernando businessman wrote](#).

## **Defining ‘Woman’**

Foster’s tweet followed anti-trans remarks from other Republicans in the state and across the country. Less than three hours before Foster’s tweet, his former opponent, Gov. Tate Reeves, [mocked President Joe Biden and his U.S. Supreme Court nominee](#), Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, for not answering a question related to gender and transgender issues.

During Jackson’s confirmation hearings earlier this week, U.S. Sen. Marsha Blackburn, a Tennessee Republican who grew up in Laurel, Miss., said she was concerned about transgender women competing as athletes alongside cisgender women. Blackburn [asked the nominee to define the word “woman.”](#)

“I can’t,” Jackson said.

“You can’t?” Blackburn asked.

“Not in this context. I’m not a biologist,” Jackson replied, referring to [the scientific complexities of gender and sex](#).

Republicans nationwide have criticized Jackson’s response, however, including U.S. Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith, Mississippi’s junior Republican senator.

“Judge Jackson, you don’t have to be a biologist to know the definition of ‘woman,’” the senator wrote in a Facebook post Thursday afternoon.

Yesterday evening, Gov. Reeves tweeted a screenshot of a Politifact headline that read, “Joe Biden keeps promise to name first Black woman to Supreme Court.”

“I did not realize Joe Biden is a biologist,” [Reeves tweeted](#). “If not, how would he even know whether he kept his promise?”

## **‘To Err On The Side of Kindness’**

In 2021, [Gov. Reeves signed a bill into law banning transgender students from participating on school sports teams](#) that match their gender. Even as Reeves signed it into law, he and other Republicans admitted that they were not aware of any instances of problems in Mississippi related to transgender sports participation.

Republican statehouses across the nation have passed their own versions of the bill, which originated with the [Alliance Defending Freedom, an evangelical Christian legal organization](#) that writes model legislation and passes it on to state lawmakers. The [ADF also wrote a Mississippi law banning abortion](#) that is at the center of a U.S. Supreme Court case that could overturn Roe v. Wade.

The [American Psychological Association](#) said in November 2021 that “there is no evidence to support claims that allowing transgender student athletes to play on the team that fits their gender identity would affect the fairness of the sport or competition.” The organization cites “ample evidence that an opportunity for adolescents to participate in sports results in positive outcomes, such as better grades, greater homework completion, higher educational and occupational aspirations, and improved self-esteem.”

This past week, Utah’s Republican governor, Spencer Cox, [vetoed a version of the transgender sports ban](#) that his own state’s lawmakers passed.

“When in doubt, I always try to err on the side of kindness, mercy and compassion,” he wrote in a

letter. "... I am learning so much from our transgender community. They are great kids who face enormous struggles."

Cox cited a study showing that [86% of transgender youth reported feelings of suicidality](#), while 56% reported a past suicide attempt. The Utah governor said that of the 75,000 high school kids participating in school sports in his state, just four are transgender, and only one of them was playing on a girls sports team.

"That's what all of this is about. Four kids who aren't dominating or winning trophies or taking scholarships," Cox wrote. "Four kids who are just trying to find some friends and feel like they are a part of something. Four kids trying to get through each day.

"Rarely has so much fear and anger been directed at so few. I don't understand what they are going through or why they feel the way they do. But I want them to live. And all the research shows that even a little acceptance and connection can reduce suicidality significantly."