

Target boycott petition attracts 895,000 signers

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WASHINGTON (RNS)—About a week after Target, the nation's second-largest discount retailer, announced transgender customers may use the restroom that "corresponds with their gender identity," more than 895,000 people have signed a #BoycottTarget online [petition](#) launched by the conservative American Family Association.

In its April 19 announcement, the Minneapolis-based retailer with 1,802 outlets said, "We believe that everyone—every team member, every guest and every community—deserves to be protected from discrimination and treated equally."

The retailer, which had \$74 billion in revenue last year, said it was motivated by legislation in about 15 states that would require individuals to use the restroom that corresponds with the sex listed on their birth certificate.

The Williams Institute, a think tank based at UCLA, [estimates](#) there are 300,000 transgender people, age 13 or older, in those 15 states.

The day after Target's statement, the American Family Association launched the boycott, saying: "Target's policy is exactly how sexual predators get access to their victims. Target's dangerous new policy poses a danger to wives and daughters."

The Mississippi-based association called on Target to install additional restrooms to be designated as single occupancy and unisex.

But Media Matters for America, a nonprofit media watchdog, called the

assertion that sex offenders exploit non-discrimination laws to gain access to the women's room an "urban myth." The group cited experts in 12 states with nondiscrimination laws to corroborate its [claim](#).

The issue of transgender civil rights has divided the Christian community. In South Dakota, David Zellmer, a Lutheran bishop, called on Gov. Dennis Daugaard to veto a bill requiring transgender people to use the restroom matching their sex at birth.

"This is a bill that ostracizes transgender students, putting them at risk in our schools," Zellmer said. "Let us stand in their corner rather than against them." Daugaard vetoed the bill March 1.

"There are no easy answers," Mark Yarhouse, a conservative evangelical psychologist and author of *Understanding Gender Dysphoria*, wrote on his [blog](#). "What I recommend is a thoughtful, prayerful approach, one characterized by humility about what we know and do not know, and a response that embodies conviction, civility and compassion."