

State Senator J.D. Mesnard Extremism Spotlight

Mesnard is a leader of the “Alliance Defending Freedom,” a national anti-LGBTQ group that overturned *Roe v. Wade*, supports criminalization of same-sex sexual acts, and defended the state-sanctioned sterilization of trans people. Mesnard is the head of the state legislative division of the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), a Christian conservative legal group and Southern Poverty Law Center-designated hate group dedicated to rolling back LGBTQ and reproductive rights. Its lawyers have won Supreme Court cases overturning *Roe v. Wade*; allowing employer-sponsored health insurance to exclude birth control; rolling back limits on government support for religious organizations; blocking pandemic-related public-health rules; and establishing the right of a baker to refuse to make a cake for a same-sex wedding. It has supported the criminalization of sexual acts between consenting LGBTQ adults, and defended state-sanctioned sterilization of trans people abroad. It has contended that LGBTQ people are more likely to engage in pedophilia; and claims that a “homosexual agenda” will destroy Christianity and society. Its longtime leader, the anti-gay activist Alan Sears, said he wishes for the day "when people say the birth-control pill was a mistake." In the legislature, Mesnard has compiled an anti-gay, anti-trans record, and said he supports "parent's right to seek professional counseling for their minor child with same-sex attraction or gender identity issues to help them reach their desired outcome." [The New Yorker, [10/9/2023](#); Southern Poverty Law Center, Accessed [2/21/2024](#); Stonewall Democrats of Arizona, Accessed [2/21/2024](#)]

Mesnard has authored multiple measures restricting voting rights, even though he admitted there isn't evidence of widespread voter fraud. In 2021, Mesnard authored SB1713, a bill to make it harder to vote early, as Arizona Republican lawmakers introduced the third-highest number of voting restriction bills in the country. Mesnard pushed for the legislation even as he admitted there was no evidence of widespread fraud. In 2022, he authored Proposition 309, a severely restrictive voter ID measure that would have eliminated voters' existing ability to present two documents as alternatives to a photo ID, made it harder to vote by mail, and disproportionately burdened Native voters. Arizona voters rejected the measure despite Proposition 309's huge fundraising advantage and the lack of organized opposition. [Cronkite News, [4/26/2021](#); AZ Mirror, [12/12/2022](#)]