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NEWS > LOCAL NEWS > HAMILTON COUNTY > CINCINNATI



'Love will win' | Hundreds of thousands celebrate Cincinnati Pride amid community concerns



Photo by: WCPO 9



By: Alex Null

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CINCINNATI — Hundreds of thousands of people marched through the streets of Cincinnati on Saturday to celebrate the city's LGBTQ+ community.

Despite the heat, organizers said they thought the turnout was bigger than last year's.

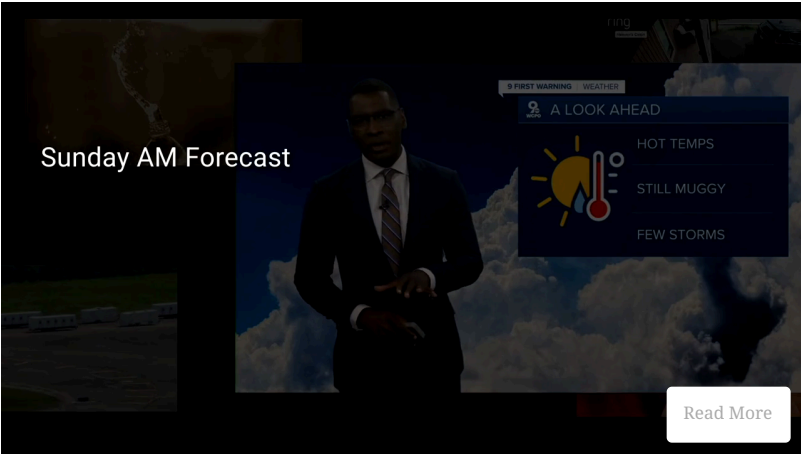
"I think it shows that pride is more important than it has been before," said Cincinnati Pride Director of Development Jake Hitch.

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Hitch said the amount of support shown at the parade and festival shows the resilience of the LGBTQ+ community.

"We're not going to be erased, we're not going to be deleted or quieted or silenced," Hitch said.



Hear why anxieties are heightened for people in the LGBTQ+ community and how advocates are responding in the video below:

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Hitch said federal pushback against the LGBTQ+ community has increased under the Trump administration.

He said efforts to scale back on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives were an example of that.

Hitch said that Cincinnati Pride declined some sponsorship and donation requests from local businesses that took part in those DEI rollbacks.

"We only wanted to have companies that fully supported us January through December and not just June to give themselves some visibility," Hitch said.

Hitch said they did take a hit financially from that, but he said through community donations, they were able to offset the costs.

During Saturday's festival, even during a time of chaos and uncertainty for the LGBTQ+ community, there was also a lot of love and support.

Especially from Tracey and Anthony Burns. They've attended Cincinnati Pride for three years, giving out free mom and dad hugs.

We asked them why it's so important for them to do that.

"They're just scared," Tracey said. "They don't know what their future's going to hold and if they're going to be allowed to be themselves."

The two said they understand some parents aren't always accepting. That's why, they said, they want to make sure everyone feels loved.

"Something about putting this shirt on and seeing a stranger start to tear up, just the thought of them getting a hug from a dad, even if it's not their biological dad, it forms an instant connection," Anthony said.

They said, in times of uncertainty, young people in the community need to stay united.

"Just be yourself," Tracey said. "Be a louder voice, and love will win."

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