

October 24, 2023

Re: Safe Schools Improvement Act

Dear Members of Congress,

We, the undersigned education and civil rights organizations, urge you to co-sponsor the Safe Schools Improvement Act (SSIA), sponsored by U.S. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) and Representatives Linda Sánchez (D-CA) and Mark Takano (D-CA). SSIA will establish federal standards to protect every student from bullying and harassment in K-12 schools, regardless of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex characteristics, disability, and religion. SSIA, which has a strong history of bipartisan support, is a necessary tool in addressing anti-LGBTQI+ discrimination. The bill provides flexibility for state and local education agencies to make schools safer for all students.

SSIA will help remove barriers to educational opportunity and promote student achievement and well-being by:

Prohibiting harassment and bullying in K-12 schools with specific enumeration of students on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex characteristics, disability, and religion.

Creating policies at the local level that address the unique needs of communities while ensuring

that all students have the opportunity to succeed in school and in life.

36% reported being bullied or called names at some point while in school.*

Those who reported being bullied were four times as likely as other students to say they do not want to go to school because they feel afraid or unsafe.*

LGBTQI+ young people experience higher rates of bullying than their non-LGBTQI+ peers.† Bullying is i3d

76% were verbally harassed in the past year because of their sexual orientation, gender expression and gender.‡

on sexual orientation (78% v. 54%) and gender expression (72% v. 52%) than educators in schools with no anti-bullying policy.^{§§}

We thank you for your consideration of co-sponsoring SSIA, which will make schools safer for all students, and we welcome the opportunity to connect further on this bill. If you have any questions, please contact Brian Ditmeier of GLSEN at brian@glSEN.org and Jennifer Pike Bailey of the Human Rights Campaign at jennifer.bailey@hrc.org.

Sincerely,

GLSEN
Human Rights Campaign

Joined by:

Advocates for Youth
American Association of University Women
American Atheists
American Federation of Teachers
American Psychological Association Services
American School Counselor Association
Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC)
Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS)
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
California LGBTQ Health and Human Services Network
CenterLink: The Community of LGBTQ Centers
Committee for Children
Council of Administrators of Special Education
EducateUS
Education Law Center
Education Reform Now
Equality California
Equality Federation
Family Equality
Fenway Health
Girls Inc.
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ+ Equality
interACT: Advocates for Intersex Youth
Kentucky Youth Law Project, Inc.
Lambda Legal
Lives in the Balance
Los Angeles LGBT Center
Movement Advancement Project
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Education Association
National Parents Union
National PTA

PFLAG National

Physicians for Reproductive Health

Q Youth Foundation

Silver State Equality – Nevada

Somos Familia Valle

State Innovation Exchange Action (SIX Action)

Teach For America

The Arc of the United States

The Center for Sexuality & Gender Diversity

The Education Trust

The Source LGBT+ Center

The Trevor Project

TNTP

Trans Formations Project

TransFamily Support Service.6 (te)5.9 (d)1.3/2.79-3 (n)1.1 (s)4.9 ()-6.6 (F)4h.9 (p(.9 (en)-1u0.9 (r)0.8 (om)-)TjEMC d[T5.8 (t)