

# The Student Non-Discrimination Act (SNDA)

## Representative Jared Polis & Senator Al Franken

### Background

- Every day, students who are, or are perceived to be, lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) are subjected to pervasive discrimination, including harassment, bullying, intimidation and violence, which is harmful to both students and our education system. Surveys indicate as many as eight in ten LGBT students have been bullied.
- These hurtful actions deprive students of equal educational opportunities and contribute to high rates of absenteeism, dropout, adverse health consequences, and academic underachievement among LGBT youth. Left unchecked, discrimination can lead, and has led, to life-threatening violence and to suicide. And when school officials engage in discriminatory treatment, or are indifferent to harassing behavior, LGBT students' constitutional rights are infringed.
- While federal civil rights statutes expressly address discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin, they do not explicitly include sexual orientation or gender identity and, as a result, LGBT students and parents have often had limited legal recourse for this kind of discrimination.

### What does the “Student Non-Discrimination Act” do?

- The “Student Non-Discrimination Act” (SNDA) would establish a comprehensive federal prohibition of discrimination in public schools based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.
- SNDA would provide protections for LGBT students and ensure that all students have access to public education in a safe environment free from discrimination, including harassment, bullying, intimidation and violence.
- SNDA would also provide meaningful and effective remedies (loss of federal funding and legal cause of action for victims) for discrimination in public schools based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, modeled after Title IX.

### Supporting Organizations

- ✓ Advocates for Youth
- ✓ African American Ministers in Action
- ✓ American Association of University Women (AAUW)
- ✓ American Federation of Teachers
- ✓ American Civil Liberties Union
- ✓ American Counseling Association
- ✓ American Psychological Association
- ✓ American School Counselor Association
- ✓ Asian American Justice Center, member of the Asian American Center for Advancing Justice
- ✓ Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
- ✓ CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
- ✓ Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
- ✓ The Episcopal Church
- ✓ Family Equality Council
- ✓ Friends Committee on National Legislation
- ✓ Gay-Straight Alliance Network
- ✓ GLAD (Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders)
- ✓ Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network
- ✓ Healthy Teen Network
- ✓ Human Rights Campaign
- ✓ Immigration Equality Action Fund
- ✓ Interfaith Alliance
- ✓ Lambda Legal
- ✓ Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
- ✓ League of United Latin American Citizens

- ✓ NAACP
- ✓ National Association of School Psychologists
- ✓ National Association of School Safety and Law Enforcement Officials
- ✓ National Association of Secondary School Principals
- ✓ National Black Justice Coalition
- ✓ National Center for Lesbian Rights
- ✓ National Center for Transgender Equality
- ✓ National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education
- ✓ National Council of Jewish Women
- ✓ National Council of La Raza
- ✓ National Council of Women's Organizations
- ✓ National Education Association
- ✓ National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund
- ✓ National Network for Youth
- ✓ National Organization for Women
- ✓ National Women's Law Center
- ✓ PFLAG National
- ✓ People For the American Way
- ✓ Point Foundation
- ✓ Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
- ✓ SAVE (Suicide Awareness Voices of Education)
- ✓ School Social Work Association of America
- ✓ Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
- ✓ Southern Poverty Law Center
- ✓ Transgender Law Center
- ✓ The Trevor Project
- ✓ Union for Reform Judaism
- ✓ Unitarian Universalist Association
- ✓ United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
- ✓ Women's Law Project

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