



AB 827 – Combating Bullying and Supporting LGBTQ Students

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Sponsor: Equality California

In Brief

Assembly Bill 827 would create a more supportive and safer learning environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) students by requiring schools to provide information to teachers on resources available to support LGBTQ students both at school and in the local community.

The Issues

All students deserve and need safe and supportive school environments in which to learn. Despite much progress, LGBTQ students in California often face verbal, physical, and online harassment. The Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network’s (GLSEN) 2013 National School Climate Survey found that 91% of California LGBTQ students report hearing anti-LGBTQ remarks, 7 in 10 reported being called names or threatened based on their sexual orientation, nearly one-third report physical harassment or assault, and 46% report cyberbullying.

These problems have direct effects on students’ school performance. GLSEN survey data shows that the average grade point average for LGBTQ students who have experienced harassment is significantly lower than for LGBTQ students who have not. In addition, the survey showed that when students feel unsafe, they miss out on time in the classroom. 30% of LGBTQ students surveyed report frequently skipping class or missing whole days of school because they felt unsafe there.

Background

Research has shown that LGBTQ students who are harassed or assaulted in school often do not report these incidents to school staff, primarily because they believe school staff will not address their reports. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that only half of California schools facilitate access to school site and community health resources for LGBTQ students, and only 39% have Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) clubs.

For More Information

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The Solution

Supportive learning environments for LGBTQ students improve academic achievement and make schools safer. Teachers play a key role in creating these supportive environments. Research shows that LGBT students with many supportive educators feel safer at school, skip fewer classes, and earn higher grades than students without supportive educators. Students in schools with GSA clubs report less harassment and assault, are more likely to report these incidents when they occur, and are less likely to miss school because of safety concerns.

The effects are so significant that the CDC specifically monitors and funds local efforts to create supportive school environments, including professional development for educators, school site resources such as GSA clubs and safe spaces for LGBTQ students, and referrals to school and community health professionals with experience providing support to LGBTQ students.

Building on past legislative accomplishments, AB 827 will make California schools more supportive places where all students can learn. Consistent with the recommendations of the CDC, this bill will provide teachers with crucial information to support LGBTQ students.

Support

- Equality California (Sponsor)
- ACLU of California
- American Academy of Pediatrics, California
- California Latinas for Reproductive Justice
- California Teachers’ Association
- Gay-Straight Alliance Network
- Gender Health Center
- Gender Spectrum
- The LGBTQ Center Long Beach
- Mental Health America of Northern California
- National Center for Lesbian Rights
- San Diego LGBT Community Center
- State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tom Torlakson
- Transgender Law Center