



Congressman Jared Polis

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115th Congress – The “Student Non-Discrimination Act” (SNDA)

Background

- Every day, students who are, or are perceived to be, lesbian, gay bisexual or transgender (LGBT) are subjected to detrimental discrimination, including verbal, physical or sexual harassment, bullying intimidation, assault and violence. Surveys indicate almost 60% of LGBT students have felt unsafe at school due to bullying, discrimination or harassment.
- 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 mental health concerns, life-threatening violence and even 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 LGBT discrimination, harassment and/or bullying.

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.
- SNDA is being introduced by Rep. Jared Polis, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Rep. Mark Takano, Rep. Bobby C. Scott, and Senator Tammy Baldwin.

Supporting Organizations:

Advocates for Youth	Gay Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN)
African American Ministers In Action	Human Rights Campaign (HRC)
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)	Lambda Legal
American Federation of Teachers	National Black Justice Coalition
American School Counselor Association	National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR)
American Unity Fund (AUF)	National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
Bend the Arc	One Colorado
Equality California	People for the American Way
Equality Delaware	Trevor Project
Equality Forum	
Equality New Mexico	
Equality North Carolina	