

## Bullying and harassment creates significant adverse consequences for students.

These harmful behaviors directly interfere with student learning and achievement and threaten the safety and well-being of millions of students each year:

- A U.S. Department of Education study has concluded that bullying and harassment affects nearly one in every three American school children in grades six through ten, and another study confirms that harassment in schools is experienced by a majority of students;
- Nearly three quarters (74.1%) of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students report being verbally harassed because of their sexual orientation, and nearly over half (55.2%) were harassed because of their gender expression. Additionally, over a third of LGBT students reported being physically harassed (e.g., pushed or shoved) based on their sexual orientation or gender expression;
- Evidence shows that bullying can result in long-term social, academic, psychological, and physical consequences, including decreased interest in school, increased absences, and decreased concentration levels for students.

## The Safe Schools Improvement Act will help educators effectively address this problem.

The Safe Schools Improvement Act will ensure that:

- Schools and districts develop and use comprehensive and effective student conduct policies that include clear prohibitions against bullying and harassment;
- Schools and districts focus on effective prevention strategies designed to help school personnel meaningfully address bullying and harassment;
- States and districts maintain and report data regarding incidents of bullying and harassment in order to inform the development of effective federal, state and local policies that address these issues.

## GLSEN urges Congress to pass the Safe Schools Improvement Act.

As policies are adapted to make schools safer, Congress should act now to meaningfully address school climate by passing the bipartisan Safe Schools Improvement Act:

- Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) and Senator Mark Kirk (R-IL) reintroduced the Safe Schools Improvement Act in the Senate in late January 2015. Representative Linda Sánchez (D-CA) and Representative Chris Gibson will be introducing the bill in the House shortly;
- SSIA has been introduced in the past five Congresses and had increasing support each session. SSIA ended the 113th Congress with 208 cosponsors in the House and 47 in the Senate. The bill has always had bipartisan support;
- Key provisions of SSIA were included in the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee's bill to reauthorize ESEA in the 112th Congress, which passed out of committee with bipartisan support.

## The Safe Schools Improvement Act has a broad range of support.

- SSIA is supported by the National Safe Schools Partnership, a coalition of over 100 leading national organizations in education, health, civil rights, youth development, and religion;
- 85% of Americans support a federal law requiring that schools enforce specific rules to stop bullying and 83% of parents support comprehensive anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies in schools.

If you have any questions about the bill, please contact Jared Solomon in Senator Bob Casey's office, Meghan McConnell in Representative Linda Sánchez's office or Nathan Smith, Director of Public Policy at GLSEN, at 202.621.5815 or [nathan.smith@glsen.org](mailto:nathan.smith@glsen.org).