

Public Policy Postcard

MARCH 2022

Welcome to the **GLSEN Policy Postcard**, a monthly newsletter for GLSEN staff and GLSEN Policy Coordinators to keep abreast of the happenings in the LGBTQ+ and education spheres. The goals of this project are to facilitate communication, community, and collaboration, so please feel free to ask questions, provide comments, or share ideas at policy@glsen.org.

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Toplines and Fast Facts

ACTION ALERT

Tell Congress to Support the Safe Schools Improvement Act:

The Safe Schools Improvement Act (SSIA) will transform the way that K-12 learning communities prevent, respond to, and measure bullying and harassment experienced by students, including those who are a part of the LGBTQ+ community. There are currently 168 House co-sponsors of the SSIA, but more support is needed to push the bill through Congress. Help to build the momentum in support of the SSIA and [send a message to your legislators](#) asking them to co-sponsor the bill. To learn more about GLSEN's public policy advocacy, please take a look at our [2022 Public Policy Agenda](#).

Next GLSEN Public Policy Coordinator Meeting:

The next Policy Coordinator zoom call will take place on **March 16 at 8:00pm ET**. Note that the agenda for this call will be shared soon, so please contact Tessa Juste, State and Local Policy Manager, to propose agenda items.

Administrative Updates

GLSEN provided recommendations to US ED on how it can improve its Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), which is used to evaluate school conditions and enforce federal civil rights protection. GLSEN submitted a public comment on US ED's proposed 2021-2022 CRDC. GLSEN's comment, which was co-signed by 42 educational and civil rights organizations, commends US ED for restoring measures that were removed by the previous administration and introducing two new and critically important measures: (1) a measure of allegations of harassment or bullying specifically on the basis of gender identity, and (2) the addition of a nonbinary gender category for reporting student enrollment data. GLSEN's comment also provides detailed recommendations for additional measures, revised measures, technical assistance practices, and reporting practices to best enable the evaluation of school climates and discriminatory school practices impacting LGBTQ+ youth, particularly those who are transgender, nonbinary, Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC), students with disabilities, and students experiencing homelessness. You can read GLSEN's CRDC comment [here](#). Notably, GLSEN was also a contributing author to another sign-on letter on the CRDC, led by the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights (LCCHR). You can learn more about the LCCHR's

recommendations [here](#). On February 28, GLSEN submitted a comment on US ED's proposed priorities for the Project Prevent grant program, which funds school district programs that reduce or address the impacts of community violence, including bullying. GLSEN urged US ED to require applicants to speak to their preparedness and plans to support youth who are LGBTQ+, BIPOC, students with disabilities and are disproportionately impacted by community violence. Additionally, GLSEN asked that US ED add a fourth priority for projects that provide alternatives to promoting law enforcement officer presence in schools, including restorative practices and trauma-informed staff. Read GLSEN's full comment [here](#).

Last month GLSEN also signed on to a letter on LGBTQ+ inclusive data collection in the Census' Household Pulse Survey. The letter, led by the Movement Advancement Project (MAP), supports the Census Bureau's inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity survey measures, and urges that these measures remain a permanent part of the survey. The letter also makes several recommendations, including: that the Census Bureau engage in research, development and testing for the identification of intersex, nonbinary, and other sexual and gender minority populations; increase over all survey sample sizes so that there is more data available for smaller demographics such as LGBTQ+ seniors; and ensure that these new, inclusive survey measures are able to be added to other surveys conducted by the Census Bureau.

State Public Policy Updates

Throughout the state legislative cycle GLSEN tracks bills that have been introduced in the legislatures of all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the US territories. Currently GLSEN is tracking 22 bills that are affirming of LGBTQ+ students and inclusive K-12 learning communities, and 183 bills that are negative towards LGBTQ+ students. The bills of greatest concern in the near term are: Florida's "Don't Say Gay" bill (SB 1834/HB 1557) and STOP WOKE Act (HB 7); "critical race theory" bans in South Dakota (HB 1012/ HB 1337), and Georgia (HB1084); a ban on transgender students participating in athletics in Indiana (HB1041); and the Slate of Hate in Tennessee. To learn more about the specific content and legislative progress of the state bills that GLSEN is tracking, you can visit our [2022 Affirmative Bill Tracker](#) and our [2022 Negative Bill Tracker](#).

Last month GLSEN published several action alerts to mobilize people to write messages to their lawmakers in opposition to anti-LGBTQ+ legislation. This includes Florida's Don't Say Gay bill (HB 1557/SB1834), an anti-trans bathroom bill in Arizona (HB 2314), and anti-trans athletics participation bills in Indiana (HB1041) and Maryland (HB 0757). Maryland's bill died in committee, Arizona's bill was held in committee with no vote, but Indiana's bill is still advancing and there is time to [send a letter to your state Senator](#) if you live in Indiana and have not done so already. Florida's Don't Say Gay bill has advanced out of the House, but there is still time to advocate against the bill in the Senate, and any Florida residents are encouraged to take action by sending a letter to their Senators [here](#).

Last month Governor Gregg Abbott of Texas issued a directive to the state's Department of Family and Protective Services to investigate parents and medical practitioners who support transgender youth in seeking gender-affirming medical care. It is important to note that this letter from the governor is non-binding and does not reflect a change in any of Texas' laws. GLSEN Executive Director Melanie Willingham-Jaggers issued a statement condemning the letter, which can be read in full [here](#).



Updates from the Hill

GLSEN worked with staff from the office of Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-23) on a letter from the Congressional LGBTQ+ Equality Caucus opposing Florida's "Don't Say Gay" bill (HB 1557/SB 1834). The letter draws from GLSEN's Florida Research Snapshot to drive home the harmful impact of a discriminatory curriculum ban that would further marginalize LGBTQ+ youth in Florida, many of whom already lack access to safe, supportive schools. Read the letter [here](#).



Public Policy Moves to Watch

- ★ Last month the GLSEN signed on to two letters to organizations with profound impacts on the lives of trans folks: the first was to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the second was to the three major credit reporting agencies as well as the Consumer Data Industry Association.
- ★ The NCAA letter, led by the Women's Sports Foundation, raised serious concerns about the association's newly adopted Transgender Athlete Participation Policy. Previously the NCAA's policy for transgender student athletes was set at the association level and applied across all sports. The new policy defers transgender athlete inclusion decisions to the different governing bodies that oversee the different sports. This creates two problems: first, trans student athletes will face a patchwork of guidelines that have different standards for trans student's participation simply based on the sports that they play, with some sports governing bodies potentially opting not to allow trans students to play at all; second inclusion policies could now be subject to change mid-sports season, rendering a previously eligible trans athlete ineligible at a moment's notice. The letter pushes for the NCAA to revise its policy by adopting equitable minimum standards that all athletic governing bodies would have to follow, including a guaranteed pathway for trans students to participate, with no one sporting body permitted to ban trans students altogether.
- ★ The Letter to the Consumer Data Industry Association (CDIA) and the Big Three credit reporting agencies, Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion, addresses credit issues that transgender and nonbinary individuals can experience after filing a legal name change. The letter, led by a coalition of LGBTQ+, consumer, and legal advocacy groups makes several recommendations, including a one-stop system be implemented so that consumers can submit a single request to have their legal name updated across all credit reporting and ensuring that only current legal names are disclosed in reports to reduce the risk of outing transgender and nonbinary consumers to landlords, employers, and creditors. You can read the letter in full [here](#).

What We're Watching in the News

Parents Organize to Fight Back Against GOP's Classroom Culture War.

The Sunday Show with Jonathan Capehart. MSNBC, February 13, 2022.

This news segment, featuring GLSEN Executive Director Melanie Willingham-Jaggers as an interviewee, is about the advocacy of parents and nonprofit organizations against the wave of exclusionary and discriminatory bills that have been introduced across the country.

White House Denounces Florida's 'Don't Say Gay' Bill as 'Hateful' After DeSantis Backs it.

Matthew Brown. USA Today, February 9, 2022.

This article is about the Biden administration's condemnation of the Don't Say Gay bill in FL and expression of support for LGBTQ+ communities.

From Book Bans to 'Don't Say Gay' Bill, LGBTQ Kids Feel 'Erased' in the Classroom.

Matt Lavietes. NBC News, February 20, 2022.

This article lifts up the stories and experiences of LGBTQ+ youth and parents as they are contending with the discriminatory bills that have been introduced throughout this state legislative cycle.

'It's Creating a Witch Hunt.' How Texas Gov. Greg Abbott's Anti-Trans Directive Hurts LGBTQ Youth.

Madeleine Carlisle. Time, February 24 2022.

This article is about the non-binding letter that the Governor of Texas sent to the Department of Family and Protective Services mischaracterizing gender-affirming medical care for trans youth as abuse.

Inclusive Sex Education is More than Ideological. It's a Human Right.

Colette Holcomb. Youth Leadership Institute, February 5, 2022.

This article is about the need for LGBTQ+ inclusive sex education accross the country, and cites GLSEN National School Climate Survery data.

For assistance with media inquiries, please contact info@glsen.org.



QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, ADDITIONS?

Have a note to add for next month's postcard? See a mistake that needs correcting? Want more resources or information? Let us know what more you would like, and even what you would like less of. Please contact policy@glsen.org.