

Public Policy Postcard

MAY 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

NEW RESOURCE

GLSEN Navigator:

Last week, GLSEN launched the [Navigator](#), an interactive data visualization map that is designed to provide advocates in every state, territory, and the District of Columbia with the information and resources they need to advocate for LGBTQ+ youth in schools. Check out the [GLSEN Navigator](#) to find interactive policy maps, state-by-state research snapshots, and state policy scorecards.

ACTION ALERT

Tell Congress to Support the Safe Schools Improvement Act

Please take the opportunity to [send a message to your legislators in support of the SSIA](#) if you have not done so already. This critical legislation will improve school climates for LGBTQ+ students and all students. So, we must continue to garner support from Congress. You can [take part in this action here](#).

ACTION ALERT

Tell Your Senators it's time to pass the Equality Act

Please continue to urge folks to contact their Senators asking them to pass the Equality Act, which will protect against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in all spheres of public life, including education. Participate in [this action alert](#) and disseminate it to your networks. To learn more about GLSEN's public policy advocacy, please take a look at our [2022 Public Policy Agenda](#).

Next GLSEN Policy Coordinator Meeting

The next Policy Coordinator zoom call will take place on **May 18 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, at tessa.juste@glsen.org, to propose agenda items.



Administrative Updates

GLSEN recently authored a comment letter to the US Department of Education urging the inclusion of survey measures that would advance data inclusion and equity for LGBTQ+ youth in the Department's proposed EdFacts data collection. Specifically, GLSEN advocated for the inclusion of a nonbinary gender identity category. The absence of this category risks the collection of inaccurate data, especially when the State Education Agencies from which the data is being collected have a nonbinary category in their own data collection, and yet for the purposes of the EdFacts survey, must report nonbinary student's gender identity as binary. You can read GLSEN's comment letter [here](#).

Last month GLSEN also signed on to a comment letter led by Campus Pride, asking the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to incorporate nonbinary students into all categories of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). You can read the letter in full [here](#).

State Public Policy Updates

Throughout the state legislative cycle GLSEN tracks bills that have been introduced in all 50 state legislatures, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. Currently GLSEN is tracking 22 bills that are affirming of LGBTQ+ students and inclusive K-12 learning communities, and 193 bills that are attacks targeting LGBTQ+ youth. Currently we are closely tracking the development of the exclusionary censorship bills in Louisiana (HB 837) and Ohio (HB 616). Another two bills that we are watching closely that would ban trans student athletes from playing sports on teams that affirm their gender in Alaska (SB 140) and South Carolina (HB 4608). 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](#).



Updates from the Hill

Last month GLSEN signed on to several letters to Congress. Two of the letters were led by the Center for American Progress, and addressed to the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS), and the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS-Ed). The letters urged each Subcommittee to expand LGBTQI+ data collection through their respective appropriations, and emphasized that investment in inclusive data collection is necessary to ensure that advocates, researchers, policymakers, and service providers are able to advance evidence-based policies. You can read the letter to LHHS-Ed [here](#), and the letter to CJS [here](#).

GLSEN also signed on to a letter pushing Congress to pass the Protecting Our Students in Schools Act (POSSA). The letter, led by the Federal School Discipline and Climate Coalition, urges members of Congress to co-sponsor POSSA which would end corporal punishment in public schools. Corporal punishment is still legal in 19 states and, studies show that students who are Black, Latinx, and students with disabilities are disproportionately subjected to corporal punishment despite being no more likely to break school rules than their less frequently punished peers. You can read the full letter in support of POSSA [here](#).

Supreme Court Updates

Last week, the Supreme Court's draft opinion in the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* case was obtained and published by [Politico](#). GLSEN's Executive Director, Melanie Willingham-Jaggers released the following statement in response to the revelation that the Court apparently has voted to overturn the constitutionally protected right to abortion:

"All people deserve bodily autonomy and freedom. We at GLSEN condemn Justice Samuel Alito's opinion draft overruling *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. This opinion violates decades of legal precedent and will affect millions of people's right to bodily autonomy. LGBTQ+ people—especially transgender people and young LGBTQ+ people—are disproportionately harmed by abortion restrictions. Abortion is healthcare and everyone deserves safe access to affirming and life-saving healthcare. We stand with the abortion funds and independent clinics on the frontlines of the fight for reproductive justice, and all people who seek their care. Meanwhile, we'll continue to work with our state partners to advance gender and reproductive justice by fighting for LGBTQ+ inclusive sex ed in all classrooms. Despite the extremist position of the court, we know the truth: bodily autonomy is not negotiable!"



Public Policy Moves to Watch



Last month GLSEN launched the GLSEN Navigator, an interactive data visualization map that is designed to provide policy practitioners with the information and resources they need to advocate for K-12 learning communities where LGBTQ+ youth can thrive and reach their full potential. The GLSEN Navigator currently includes policy maps on trans athletics, inclusive curricular standards, bullying and harassment prevention, and nondiscrimination laws in each state and territory. It also includes state-by-state research snapshots on the experiences of LGBTQ+ youth in K-12 learning communities and state policy scorecards. The Navigator will be updated and new resources added on an ongoing basis. In a press release about the launch of the GLSEN Navigator, GLSEN Chief of Staff and Deputy Executive Director for Public Policy and Research, Aaron Ridings, said:

"We call on advocates across the country to join us in rejecting the failed leadership of state and local officials who continue to advance denigrating and discriminatory legislation at the expense of the wellbeing of students in schools. Our young people are more important than any desperate politicians' blatant attempts to stir up hate to try to get votes. Leaders everywhere are responsible for strengthening our education system that has been devastated by the pandemic and ongoing mass disruption and trauma. We applaud education leaders who have taken up their responsibilities during these challenging times and will continue to provide resources and support to communities that have to compensate for the negligence and incompetence of those who continue to target and attack LGBTQ+ youth in K-12 schools."

You can explore all of the resources that the GLSEN Navigator has to offer [here](#).

What We're Watching in the News

Melanie Willingham-Jaggers: Beauty in the Margins.

Ashley Berning. Lavender Magazine, April 21, 2022.

This interview with GLSEN Executive Director, Melanie Willingham-Jaggers, discusses the history and current work of GLSEN in relation to the contemporary political context.

How Laws on Race, Sexuality Could Clash With Culturally Responsive Teaching.

Ilena Najarro. Education Week, April 21, 2022.

This article is about the barrier that curriculum censorship laws banning honest teaching about race poses to culturally responsive teaching, which is a practice that uses students' customs, characteristics, experiences, and perspectives as tools for better classroom instruction.

Is Florida's 'Don't Say Gay Law' Legal? A New Lawsuit Argues No.

Eesha Pendharkar. April 12, 2022.

This article discusses the political context and factual basis for a lawsuit that's been filed against Florida's recently enacted anti-LGBTQ+ curriculum censorship law.

'Am I Not Allowed to Mention Myself?' Schools Grapple With New Restrictions on Teaching About Gender and Sexuality.

Kalyn Belsha. Chalkbeat, April 12, 2022.

This article is about students' and educators' experiences as the anti-LGBTQ+ curriculum censorship laws passed by several states begin to be implemented.

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.