

## FACT SHEET

The Student Non-Discrimination Act (SNDA) is a federal bill that would prohibit bullying, harassment, and discrimination against students because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, or because they have lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) parents or friends.

### Why is SNDA Necessary?

- **Students at Risk:** Students are frequently targeted for bullying, harassment, or discrimination because they are or are perceived to be LGBTQ. The 2013 National School Climate Survey conducted by the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) found that 74.1% of LGBTQ students reported being verbally harassed because of their sexual orientation, and 55% because of their gender identity. 36% of students reported being physically harassed because of their sexual orientation, and 23% because of their gender expression. More than half of these students did not report the harassment to school staff, believing they would not receive help, or any staff support would make the harassment worse.
- **Children of LGBTQ Parents:** Students also frequently experience harassment because their parents or friends are LGBTQ. A 2008 study found that 42% of children with LGBT parents were verbally harassed in the past year because of who their parents are. This discrimination negatively impacts students' ability to learn or be actively involved in school programs.
- **Effects of Bullying and Harassment:** For students experiencing bullying and harassment based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, or that of a friend or family member, the harm caused does not usually end at their mistreatment alone. Bullying can affect students' mental health and academic success, including reporting higher levels of depression and low self-esteem, and being much more likely to miss school.
- **Patchwork of Laws:** Currently 18 states and the District of Columbia prohibit bullying and harassment on the basis of a student's sexual orientation or gender identity. 5 of these states and D.C. prohibit bullying or harassment against a student for his or her association with LGBTQ people: whether the student has LGBTQ parents or friends. This patchwork of laws leaves many students without adequate protection against bullying or harassment.

### How does SNDA protect students?

- **K-12:** Similar to Title IX of the Civil Rights Act, which prohibited educational discrimination on the basis of sex, SNDA would prohibit any incident of discrimination, harassment, or bullying in grades K-12 that negatively impacts a student's ability to participate in school-related programs or activities.
- **Enumeration:** Studies show that when an anti-bullying or harassment policy lists out the specific characteristics that are protected, students feel safer and teachers and administrators feel more comfortable intervening when they see bullying or harassment. When anti-bullying policies are enumerated, teachers and administrators also feel more comfortable reporting incidents of bullying or harassment to students' parents and to the proper authorities.

### Who supports SNDA?

- **Broad Coalition:** Important members of the coalition supporting SNDA include the American Association of University Women, the American Federation of Teachers, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network, the NAACP, the National Association of School Psychologists, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Council of La Raza, the National Education Association, and the National Women's Law Center.

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