

The Student Non-Discrimination Act (SNDA)

Senator Al Franken (S. 555) / Congressman Jared Polis (H.R. 998)

Background

- Every day, students who are (or are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) are subjected to pervasive discrimination, including harassment and bullying. Surveys indicate that 9 in 10 LGBT students have been bullied or harassed, and that LGBT youth are bullied two to three times more often than non-LGBT students.
- The harassment LGBT youth experience in school deprives them of equal educational opportunities by increasing their likelihood of skipping school, underperforming academically, and dropping out. Left unchecked, this harassment can lead to even more devastating consequences, including suicide. More than one-third of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth have attempted suicide.
- While federal civil rights statutes expressly address discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, disability, and national origin, they do not explicitly cover sexual orientation or gender identity. As a result, parents of LGBT students have limited legal recourse when schools fail to protect their children from harassment and bullying.

What does the Student Non-Discrimination Act do?

- The Student Non-Discrimination Act (SNDA) would establish a comprehensive federal prohibition against discrimination in public schools based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. It would give LGBT students similar civil rights protections against bullying and harassment as those that currently apply to students based on race and gender.
- SNDA would also provide meaningful remedies (loss of federal funding and a legal cause of action) for discrimination in public schools based on sexual orientation or gender identity, modeled on Title IX. Fifty years of civil rights history shows that similar laws that contain such remedies are often effective in preventing discrimination from occurring in the first place. Like other civil rights laws, SNDA would prompt schools to avoid liability by taking proactive steps to prevent the discrimination and bullying of students protected by the bill.

SNDA currently has 37 cosponsors in the Senate and 157 cosponsors in the House.

Supporting Organizations Include:

African American Ministers In Action	National Association of School Safety and Law Enforcement Officials
American Federation of Teachers	National Association of Secondary School Principals
American Civil Liberties Union	National Center for Transgender Equality
American Psychological Association	National Council of Jewish Women
American School Counselor Association	National Council of La Raza
Bazon Center for Mental Health Law	National Education Association
The Episcopal Church	National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund
Family Equality Council	National Women's Law Center
Friends Committee on National Legislation	PFLAG
Gay-Straight Alliance Network	People For the American Way
GLAD	SAVE (Suicide Awareness Voices of Education)
GLSEN	School Social Work Association of America
Human Rights Campaign	The Trevor Project
Interfaith Alliance	Transgender Law Center
Lambda Legal	Unitarian Universalist Association
Leadership Conference on Civil & Human Rights	United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
NAACP	
National Association of School Psychologists	

This is a partial list of endorsers. Please contact Alvaro_Bedoya@Franken.Senate.gov to become a sponsor.