



July 14, 2015

## OPPOSE DISCRIMINATION IN SCHOOLS

Support the Franken Student Non-Discrimination Act Amendment (SNDA) #2093 to  
the Every Child Achieves Act, S.1177

Dear Senator:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 200 national organizations to promote and protect the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, **we urge you to support the Franken Student Non-Discrimination Act Amendment #2093 to the Every Child Achieves Act, S.1177.** This amendment would prohibit discrimination against students in public schools on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, an important step in ensuring all students are welcome in school and their right to equal educational opportunity is protected.

Students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) or perceived to be LGBT are subject to well-documented, pervasive discrimination, including harassment, bullying, intimidation, and violence. These students are deprived of equal educational opportunities in public schools across our nation. Numerous studies demonstrate that discrimination at school has contributed to high rates of absenteeism, dropout, adverse health consequences, and academic under-achievement among LGBT youth. When left unchecked, such discrimination can lead to – and has led to – dangerous situations for youth.

As our nation's primary statute promoting equal access to education, it is vital that ESEA ensures that every student is able to attend school in a safe, inclusive environment free from discrimination and harassment. Decades of civil rights history show that civil rights laws are effective in decreasing discrimination against specific vulnerable groups. It is time that we extend these laws to explicitly protect LGBT youth.

We hope we can count on your support to protect students from discrimination in schools. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Nancy Zirkin, Leadership Conference Executive Vice President, at [zirkin@civilrights.org](mailto:zirkin@civilrights.org), or Liz King, Leadership Conference Director of Education Policy at [king@civilrights.org](mailto:king@civilrights.org).

Sincerely,

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