



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** February 15, 2022

“As organizations committed to serving the best interests of all youth, we are deeply alarmed at the torrent of bills introduced in state legislatures around the country this year that would directly harm LGBTQ+ youth, particularly transgender youth. These appalling proposals would compromise the safety and well-being of the young people we all have the duty and obligation to support and protect. All of our nation’s children deserve equal protection and treatment when accessing health care, and when attending school. These anti-LGBTQ+ bills promote discrimination and do harm to students, their families, and their communities.”

Since state legislatures began meeting this year, we have already seen more than 90 bills introduced seeking to deny transgender youths access to gender-affirming medical treatment, preventing them from participating in sports teams consistent with their gender identity and denying access to sex-segregated spaces that include restrooms and locker rooms. In addition, we are deeply concerned by an increase in bills aimed at censoring the inclusion of LGBTQ+ related content in school curriculum. All students need to see their identities and experiences reflected in books and lessons, and anti-bullying programs must explicitly address anti-LGBTQ bias along with other bias-based bullying. The erasure of LGBTQ+ people

from classroom discussions deprives all students of an inclusive and diverse education.

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC), America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality, is alarmed by the spate of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation proposed across the country. Their research found that less than a quarter of transgender and gender-expansive youth can be themselves at school and only sixteen percent of transgender and gender-expansive youth feel safe at school. These coordinated attacks by lawmakers are blatantly designed to deny and invalidate their existence. their communities. Every child deserves equal access to education, academic success, and a future in which they are empowered to fulfill their true potential, and these laws contravene that fundamental principle, which has long guided our nation's education policy.

LGBTQ+ youth are already at a heightened risk for violence, bullying, and harassment. In addition, students who would be affected by these bills are among our most vulnerable to experiencing depression and engaging in self-harm, including suicide. These bills exacerbate those risks by creating an unwelcoming and hostile environment in places where students should feel the safest and most supported. Research has shown that when transgender youth have access to gender-affirming services, competent care and affirmation, their risk of depression, anxiety and other negative mental health outcomes is greatly reduced.

We stand in opposition to proposals that harm LGBTQ+ youth, including limiting access to medically-necessary, best practice care, forbidding students from using the restroom at school consistent with their gender identity, and preventing transgender youth from playing sports alongside their peers. On behalf of our members and communities, we call on legislators across the country to reject these harmful measures.

Sincerely,

*American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*  
*American Academy of Pediatrics*  
*American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education*  
*American Association of School Librarians*  
*American Counseling Association*  
*American Federation of Teachers*  
*American Public Health Association*  
*American School Counselor Association*  
*American School Health Association*  
*BOOST Collaborative*  
*The Council of Administrators of Special Education*  
*Child Welfare League of America*  
*Mental Health America*  
*National Association for College Admission Counseling*  
*National Association of School Nurses*  
*National Association of Secondary School Principals*  
*National Association of Social Workers*  
*National Education Association*  
*National Parent Teacher Association*  
*Society of Pediatric Nurses*  
*The School Social Work Association of America*