

January 6, 2021

Dear Member of Congress,

We the undersigned organizations urge you to cosponsor the No Name Calling Week resolution sponsored by Congresswoman Barbara Lee (CA-13). GLSEN's No Name-Calling Week, January 18-22th, 2021, is a week organized by K-12 educators and students to end name-calling and bullying in schools. Founded in 2004 with Simon and Schuster Children's Publishing, No Name-Calling Week was inspired by James Howe's novel *The Misfits* about students who, after experiencing name-calling, run for student council on a No Name-Calling platform. This week disrupts anti-LGBTQ+ harassment and bias-based bullying, and provides an opportunity for LGBTQ+ students, including those who are transgender, nonbinary, Black, Indigenous, people of color, and people with disabilities, to feel safe, seen, and celebrated.

According to GLSEN's 2019 National School Climate Survey, schools are not safe for LGBTQ+ students and more than 8 in 10 experienced identity-based harassment or assault in school.¹ More than half of those experiencing harassment never reported it to their school, most often because they doubted intervention would make things better. Transgender and nonbinary students face especially high rates of discrimination and victimization. They are denied access to school facilities and feel unsafe at school. Students who face anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination or victimization were three times more likely to miss school in the past month, had lower grade point averages, and felt lower self-esteem.

Twenty years of research shows that dedicated support from teachers and staff, LGBTQ+ inclusive school policies, inclusive curriculum, and continued investments in resources correlate to better school outcomes for LGBTQ+ students. For example, in 2019, 62% of LGBTQ+ students had a GSA (Gay Straight Alliances or Gender and Sexuality Alliances) at their school, and these students felt safer, were less likely to miss school, and were less likely to hear homophobic or transphobic remarks than those without a GSA.

We know that words matter and we can make a fresh start in 2021 with kinder words and safer schools for everyone. This week is rooted not only in recognizing the importance of kindness, but also in the idea of #KindnessInAction. During this national call to action students and educators in communities across the country call for an end to anti-LGBTQ+ comments and harassment, advocate for LGBTQ+ inclusive policies and curriculum, and hold events to raise awareness on how to make schools safer for all students.

¹ Kosciw, J. G., Clark, C. M., Truong, N. L., & Zongrone, A. D. (2020). *The 2019 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in our nation's schools*. New York: GLSEN. <https://www.glsen.org/research/2019-national-school-climate-survey>

We thank you for your consideration and welcome the opportunity to connect further on this resolution. If you have any questions, please contact Aaron Ridings of GLSEN at aaron.ridings@glsen.org.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Youth
American Psychological Association
American School Counselor Association (ASCA)
Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS)
Bayard Rustin Liberation Initiative
Center for American Progress
Center for Disability Rights
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
COLAGE
Communities in Schools
Council of Administrators of Special Education
EDGE Consulting Partners
Educators of Excellence
Equality Federation
Equality California
Family Equality
Feminist Majority Foundation
Gender Spectrum
GLAD (GLBTQ Advocates and Defenders)
GLSEN
Human Rights Campaign
LGBTQ Victory Fund & LGBTQ Victory Institute
Michigan Teacher of the Year Network
National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)
National Association of School Nurses (NASN)
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
The National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Equality Action Team (NEAT)
National PTA
New Leaders
Next100
Oasis Legal Services

PRISM DMV
Sandy Hook Promise
Silver State Equality
Teach for America
The Trevor Project