



February 19, 2016

Dear Governors,

We, as organizations committed to serving the best interests of all youth, are deeply alarmed at the flurry of bills introduced in state legislatures around the country this year that would directly harm transgender people, and particularly transgender students. 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 protections and treatment in their classrooms; these anti-transgender bills foster discrimination and do harm to students, their families, and their communities.

Since state legislatures began meeting this year, we have already seen nearly two dozen bills introduced seeking to deny transgender students access to sex-segregated spaces that include restrooms and locker rooms, and preventing them from playing on sports teams that are consistent with their gender identity.

Transgender kids are already at heightened risk for violence, bullying and harassment, and these bills exacerbate those risks by creating a hostile environment in one of the places they should feel the safest and most supported. 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.

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC), America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality, has found that [three-quarters](#) of transgender students feel unsafe in school settings. We believe this startling number will only rise if these bills continue to target these young people.

Federal non-discrimination law also is clear that denying a transgender student access to a sex-segregated space that is consistent with their gender identity is illegal. This type of needless and mean-spirited legislation would put school districts squarely at odds with federal education non-discrimination law (Title IX), it would place their federal funding at risk, and it would open them up to lawsuits and other liability for infringing on these students' basic human rights. Both the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice have asserted that, under Title IX, school districts cannot discriminate against students based on their gender identity.

We stand in opposition to these shameful bills, and, on behalf of our members and communities, call on governors across the country to reject these harmful measures if they reach their desks. Every student 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.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Counseling Association  
American School Counselor Association  
Child Welfare League of America  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Education Association