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Change the Law

GSA activists are working to change the law! Since 1998, GSA youth activists have helped pass seven laws, protecting student rights and education in schools. Get involved and you can be a part of changing history.

You Can Change the Law!

Here?s How:

1. Learn about the how to get involved in the political system in Stand Up & Speak Out. [1]
2. Learn more about how youth and GSA Network have been involved in changing the law in California since 1999 in our Legislative History Guide. [2]
3. Join us in Sacramento each spring for Queer Youth Advocacy Day [3]where you can help advocate for important new laws by speaking directly with your representatives and rallying at the Capitol!

4. Take action right now! Sign up for GSA Network News [4] to receive our action alerts.

A History of California Legislation Related to LGBTQ Youth

GSA Network is proud of the history of advocacy work by LGBTQ and straight ally youth and their adult allies in California to pass laws creating safer schools for all students.

2014

SB 1111 - Fair and Successful School Transfers

- Status: Passed
- Summary: SB 1111 helps ensure that students being temporarily placed in county community schools have a successful transfer to and from those schools.

AB 420 - Reducing the Use of Costly and Harsh Discipline

- Status: Passed (Amended to apply to only K-3)
- Summary: AB 420 stops suspensions of California?s youngest students for minor misbehavior under ?willful defiance.

2013

AB 1266 - The School Success and Opportunity Act

- Status: Passed
- Summary: The School Success and Opportunity Act provides guidance to schools so they can make sure that transgender students, like all students, have the opportunity to do well in school and graduate.

2012

AB 1729 - Alternatives to Suspension and Expulsion

- Status: Passed
- Summary: AB 1729 changes existing law to strengthen the alternatives to suspension or expulsion and clarify that school removals should only happen after other means of correction fail to bring about proper conduct.

2011

SB 48 - FAIR Education Act

- Status: Passed
- Summary: The state of California requires schools to teach about the contributions of

women, people of color, and other historically underrepresented groups. On January 1, 2012, the state updated these guidelines to end the exclusion of people with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people from history and social studies lessons.
- Learn more: visit our FAIR Education Act resource hub [5].

AB 9 - Seth's Law

- Status: Passed
- Summary: Prompted by the suicide of 13-year-old Seth Walsh, after his Tehapachi School District failed to intervene in anti-gay bullying, Seth's Law strengthens California schools' nondiscrimination law by requiring schools to establish clear policies to address bullying that explicitly state that discrimination based on sexual orientation is prohibited.

AB 887 - Gender Nondiscrimination Act

- Status: Passed
- Summary: The Gender Nondiscrimination Act clarifies the law by explicitly adding gender identity to the list of protected classes. Previously, although the law did protect against discrimination on the basis of gender, it was not clearly stated in the California Codes.

2010

SB 543 ? Mental Health Services for At-Risk Youth

- Status: Passed
- Summary: Effective January, 1, 2011, this law permits youth ages 12-17 to consent to mental health treatment without parental permission if the attending professional believes the youth is mature enough to make the decision or if the youth would present a danger of serious physical or mental harm to self and others without the services. Previously, parental consent requirements for mental health services created a barrier to treatment that was especially harmful to LGBT youth who may be put at risk of emotional or physical abuse by coming out to their parents prematurely or without support.
- Learn more: Download the Fact Sheet. [6]

2009

SB 572 ? Harvey Milk Day Bill

- Status: Passed
- Summary: Requires the Governor to annually proclaim May 22 as Harvey Milk Day, a day of special recognition in California, and encourages public schools and educational institutions to conduct suitable commemorative exercises on that date.
- Learn more: Find out how to celebrate Harvey Milk Day [7] at school.

2008

AB 2567 ? Harvey Milk Day Bill

- Status: Vetoed
- Summary: Would have required the Governor to annually proclaim May 22 as Harvey Milk Day, and would encourage public schools and educational institutions to conduct suitable commemorative exercises on that date.

AB 3015 ? Foster Youth School Safety Education

- Status: Passed
- Summary: Requires that existing training programs for foster youth, foster youth group homes, child welfare personnel, foster parents, and relative caregivers, include information on current school safety laws that protect students from bias-motivated harassment and discrimination.

2007

SB 777 ? Students Civil Rights Act

- Status: Passed
- Summary: Creates uniform nondiscrimination standards throughout California Education Code, clarifying and making sure that all non-discrimination standards for all schools and educational programs that receive state funding are consistent.

AB 394 ? Safe Place to Learn Act

- Status: Passed
- Summary: Requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to regularly monitor school districts? complaint process procedures and whether or not school districts have adopted, posted, and publicized district anti-discrimination policies that include the same protected categories as the Education Code, including the categories of sexual orientation and gender identity. Also requires the CDE to create a model handout explaining to district staff & faculty their responsibilities to protect students from harassment and discrimination and post it on relevant department websites. Additionally, requires the CDE to make available to school districts information about curricula, training, and other resources schools can use to prevent harassment and discrimination.

2006

SB 1437 ? Bias-Free Curriculum Act

- Status: Vetoed

- Summary: Would have prohibited textbooks, classroom materials, and instruction from reflecting adversely on LGBTQ people.

AB 606 ? Safe Place to Learn Act

- Status: Vetoed
- Summary: Suggested specific steps for school districts to comply with California Student Safety and Violence Prevention Act of 2000. Reaffirmed that funds could be withheld from school districts found out of compliance with the California Student Safety and Violence Prevention Act of 2000.

2003

SB 71 ? California Comprehensive Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Prevention Act

- Status: Passed
- Summary: Requires sexual health education to be more inclusive of healthy attitudes regarding gender, sexual orientation, dating, marriage, family, and body image. Requires materials and instruction to be medically accurate, age appropriate, objective and not based on religious doctrine. Removes ?abstinence until marriage? from curriculum in order to provide young people with the skills necessary to protect themselves from unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Requires that school districts adopt an ?opt out? policy in regards to sexual health education (instead of an ?opt in? policy).
- Learn more: Read the Fact Sheet. [8]

1999

AB 537 ? California Student Safety and Violence Prevention Act of 2000

- Status: Passed
- Summary: Added actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender (including gender identity and gender-related appearance and behavior) to the California Education Code non-discrimination policy.
- Learn more: Read the Fact Sheet. [9]

Source URL: http://www.gsanetwork.org/get-involved/change-california/change-law

Links:
[1] http://www.gsanetwork.org/get-involved/change-california/stand-and-speak-out
[2]

http://www.gsanetwork.org/files/getinvolved/Legislative%20History%20Guide%20for%20CA%20LGBTQ%20youth%20le
[3] http://www.gsanetwork.org/events/queer-youth-advocacy-day
[4] http://www.gsanetwork.org/gsa-network-news
[5] http://www.gsanetwork.org/FAIR
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http://www.gsanetwork.org/../../../../../../files/getinvolved/SB%20543%20%28LENO%29%20Mental%20Health%20Servic
[7] http://www.gsanetwork.org/resources/gsa-actions-events/harvey-milk-day
[8] http://www.gsanetwork.org/resources/legal-resources/sb-71-fact-sheet
[9] http://www.gsanetwork.org/resources/legal-resources/ab-537-fact-sheet