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Youth Across the Country to Remember Slain Teen Lawrence King

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MEDIA ADVISORY

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YOUTH ACROSS THE COUNTRY TO REMEMBER SLAIN TEEN LAWRENCE KING

Vigils will take place in Los Angeles and around the country on February 12
Register online for vigils in your area

February 12th, 2010 marks the second anniversary of the murder of Lawrence King, an eighth-grader from Ventura, CA, who in 2008 was shot and killed by a classmate because of his perceived sexual orientation and gender expression.

WHAT: Local organizations, youth, and community groups are holding vigils and other events to remember Lawrence King, honor his life, and raise awareness about preventing violence and bullying in our schools.

WHERE & WHEN: GSA Network will be holding a vigil in Los Angeles on February 12. See www.gsanetwork.org/lawrenceking [2] for details about this vigil. For information on vigils taking place around the country, visit www.rememberinglawrence.org [3].

WHY: King's tragic story highlights the need for strong laws, policies, and programs to keep our young people safe. His death is not an isolated incident and it underscores a broader problem of

bullying and harassment in our schools based on actual and perceived sexual orientation and gender expression.

A 2007 study conducted by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) found that more than 9 out of 10 LGBT middle school students surveyed (91%) said they experienced harassment at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation, 59% experienced physical harassment and a startling 39% said they had been physically assaulted, nearly twice as many as in high school (20%). That same study found that more than 8 out of 10 LGBT middle school students (82%) reported hearing homophobic epithets frequently or often from other students in school -- a higher percentage than high school students (73%). Perhaps most shocking, 63% of LGBT middle school students had heard school staff make homophobic remarks.??

Support provided by:

Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, (GLAAD [4]); GSA Network [5]; Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN [6]); Ventura County Rainbow Alliance [7]; Human Rights Campaign (HRC [8]); National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR [9]); Equality California [10]

http://www.gsanetwork.org/lawrenceking [2]

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