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School Success and Opportunity Act Passes Assembly Education Committee

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The School Success and Opportunity Act (AB 1266), authored by Assemblymember Tom Ammiano, has passed the Assembly Education Committee by a vote of 5-2.

The bill, which is co-sponsored by Equality California, Transgender Law Center, GSA Network, Gender Spectrum, and the National Center for Lesbian Rights, addresses the exclusion of transgender students from classes and activities, and clarifies existing anti-discrimination law to provide clear protections to transgender students.

?Every school year we receive dozens of calls on our legal helpline from the families of California students who are being excluded from school activities because they are transgender." said Masen Davis, Transgender Law Center executive director. "Today the Education Committee acknowledged that transgender students should be treated like all other students and be given a fair chance to participate and succeed in school. On behalf of those youth and families, we are incredibly grateful for the committee?s support.?

Carolyn Laub, Executive Director of Gay-Straight Alliance Network, said: "On behalf of our youth members across the state, GSA Network applauds the Assembly Education Committee for moving the School Success and Opportunity Act forward and affirming that all students, including transgender students, should have the opportunity to fully participate in and graduate from school."

"This bill goes to the heart of the mission of our education system to provide a quality, safe education for all students, including transgender students." said John O'Connor, Equality California executive director. "Equality California applauds the courage and leadership of Committee Chair Buchanan and all of the members who voted for this bill."

"Today we are one step closer to ensuring transgender students are given a fair chance to learn, participate fully, succeed, and be themselves at school,? said Melissa Goodman, a senior staff attorney with the ACLU of California.

ACLU of California*comprises the statewide work of the three California affiliates of the American Civil Liberties Union to protect and defend civil liberties.*

Equality California (EQCA) *is the largest statewide lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender advocacy organization in California. Over the past decade, Equality California has strategically moved California from a state with extremely limited legal protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people to a state with some of the most comprehensive protections in the nation. Equality California has partnered with legislators to successfully sponsor more than 85 pieces of pro-equality legislation. EQCA continues to advance equality through legislative advocacy, electoral work, public education and community empowerment.www.EQCA.org [1]*

Gay-Straight Alliance Network (GSA Network)*is a national youth leadership organization that empowers youth activists to fight homophobia and transphobia in schools by training student leaders and supporting student-led Gay-Straight Alliance clubs throughout the country. In California alone, GSA Network has brought GSA clubs to 56% of public high schools, impacting more than 1.1 million students at over 900 schools. GSA Network's youth advocates have played a key role in changing laws and policies that impact youth at the local and state level. GSA Network operates the National Association of GSA Networks, which unites 37 statewide networks of GSA clubs throughout the country.www.gsanetwork.org[2]*

Gender Spectrum provides resources, training and support to create gender sensitive and inclusive environments for all children and teens. www.genderspectrum.org [3]

The National Center for Lesbian Rights *is a national legal organization committed to advancing the human and civil rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community through litigation, public policy advocacy, and public education.www.NCLRights.org [4]*

Transgender Law Center *works to change law, policy, and attitudes so that all people can live safely, authentically, and free from discrimination regardless of their gender identity or expression.www.TransgenderLawCenter.org[5]*

Press Release
http://www.gsanetwork.org [6]

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