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Students and Families Optimistic That School Success and Opportunity Act (AB1266) Will Remain Law

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Referendum Did Not Qualify on Raw Count and Now Moves to Full Count

Transgender students, and their parents, educators and friends today are both relieved and concerned that while the California School Success and Opportunity Act (AB 1266), which helps schools better understand how to provide a fair opportunity for transgender students to participate and succeed, failed to qualify for a referendum based on a random count of signatures but may still qualify depending on the outcome of a full count of the signatures. The law went into effect on January 1st and today the Secretary of State announced that a referendum has failed to qualify for the ballot on the first spot count of the signatures, though that finding will be confirmed by a full count.

The referendum fell 22,178 signatures short of the 504,760 needed to qualify in the first count, a result that will be confirmed with a full count of signatures.

?I hope this measure won?t qualify because I think this is going to help students, including transgender students like me, have the chance to succeed,? said Ashton Lee, a student in Manteca, California. ?My family stood proud and strong throughout this whole journey, and I

know that they will be there for me no matter what.?

?As a Mom, all I want is for my child, and all children, to participate fully in school, succeed, and become wonderful adults. That?s what this law is about,? said Catherine Lee, Ashton?s mother.

?In my experience, supporting transgender students based on their gender identity, including allowing them to use facilities or participate in activities, is just another way that schools work to ensure all students can be successful,? said Sara Stone, a principal at Oakland Unified School District. ?This is not an issue that other students are bothered about, and is one that makes a tremendous difference for the transgender students we serve."

The School Success and Opportunity Act helps schools across the state understand their obligation to provide a fair opportunity for transgender students to participate equally in all school programs, facilities and activities. The law has been welcomed by school officials, teachers, and parents for educating California schools about meeting the educational needs of these students. Both state and federal law already prohibits discrimination against transgender students, and many school districts, have had supportive policies in place for years. But before the School Success and Opportunity Act, many schools did not understand how to fulfill their obligations to support these students.

The new law has already had a significant impact. Since it was enacted last year, several school districts have already adopted new policies to protect transgender students, and the California School Boards Association has issued guidance that instructs schools to handle each request by a transgender student, or his or her parent, on a case-by-case basis so that the unique educational needs of every student can be met.

"Despite the full count of signatures that will now take place, projections show the referendum falling well clear of the 504,760 valid signatures needed to qualify," said Carolyn Laub, Executive Director of GSA Network. "In the meantime, we are encouraged by how many schools are putting policies and plans in place to meet the educational needs of their transgender students."

These guidelines advise schools upon request to allow all students to use the gender-specific facility that matches their genuinely-held gender identity; to train and prepare staff on how to support the genuine needs of transgender students; and to allow all students to participate in interscholastic sports consistent with the California Interscholastic Federation bylaws.

To learn more, please visit www.SupportAllStudents.org [2].

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Press Release
Referendum did not qualify on raw count, moves on

Source URL: http://www.gsanetwork.org/optimistic-about-1266-pr

Links:
[1] mailto:jesse@eqca.org
[2] http://www.SupportAllStudents.org