

Letter Opposing Anti-Transgender Bills from South Carolina Educators

South Carolina General Assembly,

As educators – including teachers, counselors, school nurses, and administrators – with significant interest in the wellbeing of South Carolina’s youth, we write to you with strong concerns about legislation currently being considered in South Carolina. We stand in firm opposition to any legislation targeting the LGBTQ+ community.

Two bills being considered now in South Carolina would discriminate against transgender young people and pose grave danger to the welcoming and inclusive climate that we need in our state. We strongly oppose these bills.

One bill, H.3477/S.531 (and its new clone, **H.4153**), would restrict transgender students from playing on school sports teams. A separate bill, H.4047, would prohibit transgender people under the age of 18 from receiving essential medical care by making it a felony for medical professionals to provide transition-related care to transgender minors, punishable with up to 20 years in prison. The bill also essentially requires educators to “out” transgender students to their parents, potentially before they are ready to share.

The far-reaching negative impacts of these bill are very real, and very alarming: Transgender students, like other students, deserve the same opportunities to thrive as any other student.

That means being able to participate in school athletics, through which they can learn sportsmanship, leadership and self discipline, and build a sense of belonging with their peers. H.3477 and H.4153 would block children from having the opportunity to play sports, through which they develop and learn to use core brain functions. Studies have shown that children that participate in sports, in and outside of school, are more interactive and focused in class, are able to absorb and recall information better, and have lower stress levels. This, in turn, positively affects their academic performance.

Trans youth must also be able to access the essential medical care they need. Patients and their health care providers, not politicians, should decide what medical care is in the best interest of a patient in accordance with current medical best practices. But H.4047 aims to intervene in that decision and tries to prevent trans youth from having the chance to live as the gender they know they are inside.

Finally, trans youth must also be able to turn to supportive adults at school to speak confidentially about their lives. By requiring teachers, administrators, counselors, and nurses to share with students’ parents if they learn that a student’s “perception of [their] gender or sex is inconsistent with the minor’s sex,” H.4047 would require us to violate the trust of our transgender or gender expansive students.

At the end of the day, everyone should be treated with dignity and respect – and that includes transgender young people. A supermajority of South Carolinians (68%) say they support comprehensive nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ people. Anti-LGBTQ legislation has no place in SC.

Passing either bill would undeniably lead to major challenges for South Carolina, including negative effects on students’ ability to learn and a tarnished image on the national platform.

We ask you to stand with us and strongly urge you to reject these bills.

SIGNERS

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