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FAIR Education Act Introduced, Sponsored by GSA Network

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jackie Downing [1]
415-552-4229

Senator Mark Leno Introduces FAIR Education Act

New legislation sponsored by Equality California and Gay-Straight Alliance Network aims to stop discriminatory education and promote school safety?

Sacramento ? Equality California and Gay-Straight Alliance Network are sponsoring the Fair, Accurate, Inclusive, and Respectful (FAIR) Education Act, a bill introduced today by Senator Mark Leno (D-San Francisco), that would prohibit discriminatory education and ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are fairly and accurately included in instructional materials. Studies have shown that inclusion of LGBT people in instructional materials is linked to greater student safety and lower rates of bullying. The bill would also prohibit the State Board of Education from adopting instructional materials that discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Twenty members of the California Legislature have agreed to co-author SB 48.

The FAIR Education Act would bring classroom instruction into alignment with existing non-discrimination laws in California and would add LGBT to the existing list of underrepresented cultural and ethnic groups, which are covered by current law related to inclusion in textbooks and other instructional materials in schools. By including fair and accurate information about LGBT people and history in instructional materials, SB 48 will improve student safety, reduce bullying, enrich the learning experiences of all students, and promote an atmosphere of safety and respect in California schools.

?LGBT youth are denied a fair education when they are exposed to harmful stereotypes in classroom materials and are excluded from learning about their history,? said Carolyn Laub, GSA

Network?s Executive Director. ?The FAIR Education Act is a key step in preventing discrimination in the classroom and creating safe, respectful schools.?

?Given the number of young people who tragically took their own lives after being bullied for being LGBT ? or perceived as being LGBT, it is imperative that we do more to ensure that all children feel fully welcomed, and this legislation is an important step toward that goal,? said Geoff Kors, Equality California Executive Director. ?LGBT people should not be pushed into the closet when it comes to what students learn about history. Educating youth about the contributions of LGBT Californians and our state?s rich diversity will help foster true acceptance of LGBT students and will ultimately create a safe school environment for all students.?

?Most textbooks don?t include any historical information about the LGBT movement, which has great significance to both California and U.S. history,? said Senator Leno (D-San Francisco). ?Our collective silence on this issue perpetuates negative stereotypes of LGBT people and leads to increased bullying of young people. We can?t simultaneously tell youth that it?s OK to be yourself and live an honest, open life when we aren?t even teaching students about historical LGBT figures or the LGBT equal rights movement.?

Download the FAIR Education Act Fact Sheet [2].FAIR Education Act Fact Sheet

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Gay-Straight Alliance Network (GSA Network) is a 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 in California and throughout the country. Since GSA Network began in 1998, the number of GSA clubs in California schools has increased from 40 to 830, including more than 53% of the public high schools and a growing number of middle 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. www.gsanetwork.org [3]

Equality California (EQCA) is the largest statewide lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights advocacy organization in California. Over the past decade, Equality California has strategically moved California from a state with extremely limited legal protections for LGBT individuals to a state with some of the most comprehensive civil rights protections in the nation. Equality California has passed more than 70 pieces of legislation and continues to advance equality through legislative advocacy, electoral work, public education and community empowerment. www.eqca.org [4]

http://www.gsanetwork.org [5]
Press Release
GSA Network

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Links
[1] mailto:jackie@gsanetwork.org
[2] http://gsanetwork.org/files/getinvolved/FAIR%20Education%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf

[3] http://gsanetwork.org/
[4] http://www.eqca.org
[5] http://www.gsanetwork.org