



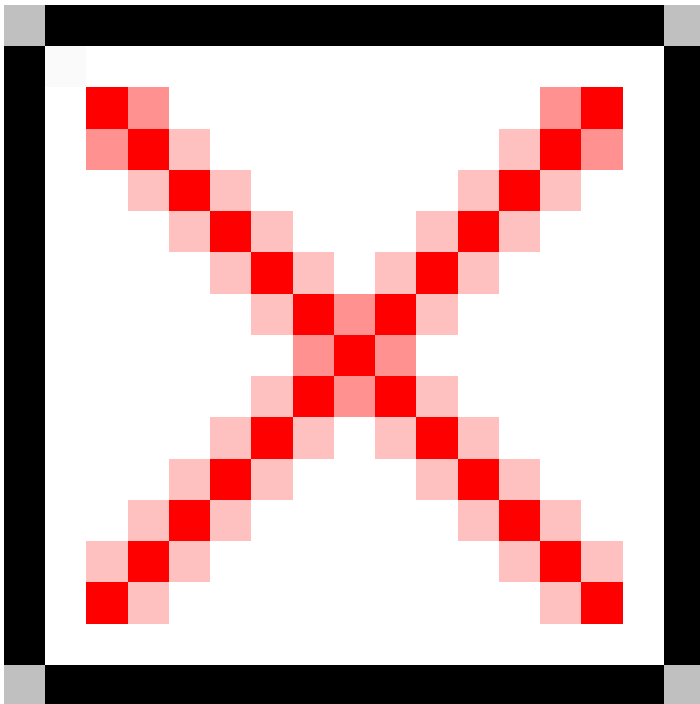
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[Home](#) > Testifying Before the Joint Legislative Audit Committee

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## Testifying Before the Joint Legislative Audit Committee

Aug. 8, 2012 ? Calen Valencia



UPDATE: Audit request approved in 9-4 bipartisan vote by Joint Legislative Audit Committee.

In April, [GSA Network](#) <sup>[1]</sup>, [Equality California Institute](#) <sup>[2]</sup>, [Transgender Law Center](#) <sup>[3]</sup> and [The Trevor Project](#) <sup>[4]</sup> hosted the annual [Queer Youth Advocacy Day](#) <sup>[5]</sup> (QYAD) in Sacramento and I was accepted to participate. For someone like me, who found out about these organizations less than a year prior, this was HUGE for me! I had never heard of this camp, or anything like it, except I knew for a fact my life would be turned around. I was right.

In those four activist-packed days, I learned more than enough to know that my district wasn't following through with the anti-discrimination laws, and hasn't been, either. They broke us into groups of what issues we would be focusing on, and I was lucky enough to be sorted into the Joint Audit Legislature Committee (JLAC) group, where I would later find out, my personal

experiences would mean a whole lot more than I ever guessed.

I was bullied for years and teachers never addressed it until I had to step in and face the issue myself, in a violent matter. It wasn't until then that administrators stepped in, and even then, I was the one who was wrongly disciplined, not my bully. This is why I am going to speak tomorrow in Sacramento with assembly members and joining together with Equality California and GSA Network to testify on why California Public Schools (especially in Central Valley) should be audited to see if districts are complying with laws set in place.

I'm so nervous and excited to know that one small voice can make a difference! I really hope this audit is passed.

*Calen Valencia is a senior at Tulare Union High School and GSA Network Board Member. For more about the audit request, see our [press release](#)<sup>[6]</sup>. This piece was originally posted at the [EQCA blog](#)<sup>[7]</sup>.*

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#### **Links**

[1] <http://gsanetwork.org/>

[2] <http://www.eqcai.org/>

[3] <http://www.transgenderlawcenter.org/>

[4] <http://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

[5] <http://eqcablog.org/2012/05/01/2012-queer-youth-advocacy-day/>

[6] <http://gsanetwork.org/news/audit-will-hold-schools-accountable-protecting-all-students/080812>

[7] <http://eqcablog.org/2012/08/07/the-night-before-testifying-before-the-joint-legislative-audit-committee/>