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Jul. 26, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Anti-Equality Forces OK to Circulate Petitions to Overturn FAIR Education Act

Sacramento - Anti-equality advocates the Capitol Resource Institute received approval from the State today to circulate petitions for a referendum on the June 2012 ballot that asks voters to overturn SB 48-the FAIR (Fair, Accurate, Inclusive, and Respectful) Education Act signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown earlier this month. The group has until mid-October to collect more than 504,000 signatures to qualify the measure for the ballot. Equality California Executive Director Roland Palencia and Gay-Straight Alliance Network Executive Director Carolyn Laub issued the following statement today in response:

"California has a long legacy of leading the nation on issues of inclusion and justice and the FAIR Education Act represents the next step in that tradition," said Roland Palencia, Equality California Executive Director. "This attack on the FAIR Education Act isn't just an attempt to censor the contributions of LGBT people and people from the history books, it's also an attempt by our opponents to revive lies based on prejudice about LGBT people being dangerous to children. Over the coming months, we are prepared to prevent this measure from reaching the ballot by engaging Californians in a conversation about our opponent's real motivations and the truth about what the FAIR Education act does and does not do."

"The FAIR Education Act ensures that all students in California receive a fair and accurate account of our state and our nation's history, including the contributions of women, people of color, LGBT people, people with disabilities, and other historically underrepresented groups. Sadly, throughout history, conservative groups have tried to exclude the contributions of these communities when they haven't suited their political agenda," said Carolyn Laub, Executive Director of Gay-Straight Alliance Network. "We trust that Californians will continue to support an honest education that does not erase the LGBT community and its accomplishments from history."

The FAIR Education Act requires that LGBT Americans and people with disabilities are included and recognized for their important historical contributions to the economic, political and social development of California. It adds both groups to the existing law that requires schools to include underrepresented groups, including women and people of color, in textbooks and other instructional materials. It also prevents the adoption of materials that discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, disability or religion.

Research shows that in schools where LGBT people are included in classroom discussions, students are 50% less likely to report being bullied.

Among the diverse supporters of the FAIR Education Act are: Adolescent Health Working Group, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Anti-Defamation League, Arc and United Cerebral Palsy in California, Asian Americans for Civil Rights & Equality, Asian/Pacific Islander Youth Promoting Advocacy & Leadership, California Language Teachers Association, California Psychological Association, California Teachers Association, California Faith for Equality, Californians for Disability Rights, Inc., City of Oakland, City of West Hollywood, Disability Rights California, Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom, Los Angeles Unified School District, Public Advocates, San Francisco Unified School District, Transgender Law Center, California Church IMPACT, Our Family Coalition, National Center for Lesbian Rights, Fresno County Democratic Central Committee, San Joaquin Valley Democratic Club, The Trevor Project, School for Integrated Academics & Technologies, and the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund.

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Equality California 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]

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 850 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 more than 30 statewide networks of GSA clubs throughout the country. GSA Network is also the founder of the *Make It Better Project*, which aims to stop bullying and prevent suicide. www.gsanetwork.org ^[5]

Press Release

<http://www.gsanetwork.org> ^[5]

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