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New Model Policy For the School Success and Opportunity Act Helps Schools Support All Students

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(San Francisco, CA, February 13, 2014) Today, the Support All Students campaign—including a broad coalition of nearly 100 state and national organizations backing California’s law that ensures all schoolchildren have a fair chance to do well—applauds the California School Boards Association’s (CSBA) new model policy to help districts comply with the law.

The model policy released today lays the foundation for California’s 1,043 school districts to ensure that all children—including those who are transgender—have fair opportunities to do well in school following the January 1st start of the new School Success and Opportunity Act, also known as Assembly Bill 1266.

The policy will help students like Zoey, a 12-year-old transgender girl from the Los Angeles area who transferred out of her school after administrators there refused to acknowledge her as a girl or allow her to use the girls’ restroom. Her mom, Ofelia Barba, says that the law makes it easier for her daughter to go to school and be herself.

“I love my daughter and want the same things for her that other parents want for their children,” Barba said. “I want what’s best for her, for her to be happy, and for her to be able to do well in school. No one wants to see any kid singled out and excluded from school because of who they are.”

The supporters include the Transgender Law Center, National Center for Lesbian Rights, ACLU of California, Gay-Straight Alliance Network, Equality California, Gender Spectrum, LGBT organizations, racial justice organizations, statewide teacher and parent organizations, and others committed to ensuring that all kids have the opportunity to do well in school and graduate.

“We applaud the California School Boards Association for developing a model policy that ensures that transgender kids have the same opportunities to do well in school and graduate as all other students,” said Transgender Law Center Executive Director and Campaign Chair Masen Davis. “This law is about doing what’s best for all students—that’s why it’s supported by school boards, teachers, and the PTA.”

According to the CSBA policy, Pursuant to Education Code 221.5, as amended by AB 1266 (Ch. 85, Statutes of 2013), a district is required to permit a student to use facilities and participate in sex-segregated school programs and activities consistent with the student's gender identity, regardless of the gender listed on his/her educational records. However, an attempt is currently in progress to qualify a referendum on AB 1266 for the November 2014 ballot. Even as the eventual outcome is unknown as of this writing, the following guidelines are designed to implement other existing state and federal laws that prohibit discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying against students based on their real or perceived gender identity and/or gender expression regardless of whether or not the referendum attempt is successful. The guidelines address certain issues and circumstances that may arise in relation to the needs of transgender and gender-nonconforming students and are by no means exhaustive. Consequently, each instance or situation should be addressed on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the safety, privacy, and other concerns of all students involved are appropriately addressed.?

Learn more about the law at www.SupportAllStudents.org [1]

Press Release

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Links

[1] <http://www.SupportAllStudents.org>