



Statement of Support for the SAFETY Act from the Riverside County LGBTQ+ Student Safety Coalition:

The Riverside County LGBTQ+ Student Safety Coalition strongly supports the passage of Assembly Bill 1955 (AB 1955), also known as the SAFETY Act, introduced by the California LGBTQ+ Legislative Caucus and Assemblymember Chris Ward.

Protecting the Privacy and Safety of LGBTQ+ Students

This critical legislation safeguards the privacy and safety of LGBTQ+ students in California schools. By prohibiting forced outing, AB 1955 ensures that students have the right to choose when and with whom they share their sexual orientation and gender identity. This empowers young people to come out on their own terms, fostering a safe and supportive learning environment.

Upholding Family Autonomy

The SAFETY Act also respects the autonomy of families. Coming out is a deeply personal journey, and many families prefer to navigate these conversations privately. This legislation acknowledges the importance of family support for LGBTQ+ youth without forcing teachers and administrators into their private conversations.

Combating Bullying and Harassment

What we know for sure is that forced outing can lead to increased bullying, harassment, isolation, and serious mental health issues for LGBTQ+ students. In 2023, over 500 anti-trans bills were introduced and considered across the United States. This unprecedented, rapid increase in attacks on LGBTQ+ rights across the nation, and in our backyards, has had devastating consequences for queer youth. Additionally, after the recent failure of anti-LGBTQ+ extremists to qualify an anti-transgender initiative for the 2024 California General Election ballot, our LGBTQ+ students are reeling from harmful rhetoric and policies locally and nationwide.

The SAFETY Act is a bright beacon of hope for our students and creates a safer school environment by eliminating this harmful practice. Schools can then focus on fostering inclusivity and acceptance for all students.

The Riverside County LGBTQ+ Student Safety Coalition urges the California State Legislature to pass AB 1955 without delay. This vital legislation protects the rights and safety of LGBTQ+ students, ensuring they can thrive in California schools.



About the Riverside County LGBTQ+ Student Safety Coalition

The Riverside County LGBTQ+ Student Safety Coalition was formed in October of 2023, in response to harmful and dangerous anti-LGBTQ+ and anti-trans policies being enacted in our local schools and communities. The coalition is made up of twelve organizations and community members that believe schools should be safe spaces for learning regardless of students' sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. **All youth deserve affirming and inclusive spaces to learn, thrive, and be themselves — free from harmful anti-LGBTQ rhetoric and policies that violate their rights and negatively impact their mental health.**