



U.S. Senator for Pennsylvania

THE SAFE SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT ACT

Legislation Introduced in the U.S. Senate by Senator Bob Casey

Bullying and harassment of students is widespread and affects millions of students every year. The Safe Schools Improvement Act is designed to help schools address this problem by ensuring that no child is afraid to go to school for fear of unchecked bullying and harassment.

What is the Safe Schools Improvement Act?

- Requires schools and districts receiving federal funding to specifically prohibit bullying and harassment, including conduct based on a student's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or religion.
- Ensures that schools and school districts focus on effective prevention programs in order to better prevent and respond to incidents of bullying and harassment both in school and online.
- Requires states to report data on incidents of bullying and harassment to the Dept. of Education

Why is this needed?

- According to a 2019 report by the Department of Education, in 2019 roughly 22 percent of students aged 12-18 reported being bullied at schools
- Research shows that bullying and harassment have adverse long-term consequences, including decreased concentration at school, increased school absenteeism, damage to the victim's self-esteem, and increased social anxiety.
- According to a 2019 National School Climate Survey by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), the majority (86.3%) of LGBTQ+ students experienced harassment or assault in the past year based on personal characteristics, more than one-third (36.5%) were victimized at school based on their actual or perceived disability and one third of students (32.7%) missed at least one day of school in the last month because they felt unsafe.
- While we do have federal laws to provide support to promote school safety, there is nothing currently in place to comprehensively and expressly address issues of bullying or harassment.

Who supports the Safe Schools Improvement Act?

Numerous education, health and youth development organizations support SSIA, including the American Association of University Women (AAUW); American Atheists, American Federation of Teachers; American School Counselor Association; Athlete Ally; Campus Pride; Center for American Progress; Center for LGBTQ Economic Advancement and Research (CLEAR); CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers; Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning; Committee for Children; Council of Administrators of Special Education; EDGE Consulting Partners; Family Equality; Girls Inc.; GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality; Healthy Teen Network; interACT: Advocates for Intersex Youth; Mazzoni Center; Movement Advancement Project; National Association of School Psychologists; National Association of Secondary School Principals; National Black Justice Coalition; National Equality Action Team (NEAT); National Indian Education Association; PFLAG National; PowerON (a program of the LGBT Technology Institute); Public Justice; Sandy Hook Promise; Silver State Equality-Nevada; Teach for America; The Trevor Project; Whitman-Walker Institute