One in six students will be assaulted so badly at school that medical care will be required. If this were true of the overall student population, Americans would be up in arms and would not rest until the problem is solved. When the student population being assaulted is homosexual students, less attention is paid and fewer solutions are offered (<http://www.ed.psu.edu/educ/epcse/counselor-education/newsletters/CounseLion_030211.pdf>).

One in six members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) students face these horrendous assaults base upon their perceived lifestyles, but, 61% of these LGBT students report not feeling safe at school and 44% reported being physically harassed based solely upon their perceived sexual orientation. Comparatively, about 25% of heterosexual teens reported being bullied at school. Bullying in any form affects a student’s ability to concentrate on schoolwork; but way too often, the LGBT students go to school fearing for the physical safety. They live their lives with such a large emotional toll that sometimes the students believe the only way to solve the turmoil of their life are to commit suicide (<http://www.ed.psu.edu/educ/epcse/counselor-education/newsletters/CounseLion_030211.pdf>).

Between July and September, 2010, four young men, Justin Aaber, age 15; Billy Lucas, age 15; Seth Walsh, age 13; and Asher Brown, age 13; all committed suicide. The families of all of these boys said the boys had been harassed and bullied for being homosexual. Every year there are many suicides of young people as a result of anti-homosexual bullying, the true number may never be known because the victims often don’t feel comfortable in confiding to an adult about the harassment or the reason they are picked on, and even more often, they don’t share their frustration with the harassment and bullying they must live with on a daily basis (<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/jamey-rodemeyer-suicide-ny-police-open-criminal-investigation/story?id=14580832>)

Another tragedy occurred in September, 2011. Jamey Rodemeyer was a 14 year old boy who had been harassed at school and online for more than a year. Jamey had received some notoriety for posting a video on the It Gets Better website about how eventually, the harassment and intolerance for being a homosexual get better, and that young people who are being bullied, particularly for their perceived sexuality should not give up. The stress that Jamey himself was under was too much for him to bear and he committed suicide (<http://www.education.com/magazine/article/gay-bullying-epidemic/>).

Since the school shootings of the mid-90’s at Columbine, Pearl, Mississippi, Jonesboro, and other places, schools around the nation have put a special emphasis on preventing bullying and have stressed tolerance among students. Often, the prevention and the harm that bullying a student for their sexual orientation is not address in these lessons. In a 2009 study by the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight alliance, only 18% of the teens who responded to a survey reported that the anti-bullying program in their school addressed the issue of being bullied for perceived sexual orientation. Experts on bullying believe that if the specific behavior that needs to be addressed is not mentioned by name, then the resulting behaviors will not be changed. An example was that a general lesson that it is inappropriate to bully does not work as well as telling them that they should not pick on others based upon the color of their skin or religion. Telling students that it is wrong to harass others based on sexual orientation would be more effective than not specifically naming this kind of bullying (<http://www.livescience.com/6048-gay-lesbian-teens-bullied-heterosexuals.html>).

California has an anti-bullying program that does address anti-homosexual behavior. This law drew a great amount of fire and controversy because the religious right believed that teaching tolerance of homosexuality is wrong and teaching tolerance is actually pushing a gay agenda. Meanwhile, in July of 2011, Governor Jerry Brown signed into law a new bill that required the teaching of the contributions of sexual minorities. Although not necessarily the point of the bill, many anti-bullying advocates hope that students will learn more tolerance of the LGBT community by looking at their accomplishment (<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/07/14/california-gay-history-law-jerry-brown_n_898745.html>).

Every day, students in America are being bullied because of their perceived sexual orientation. The result is all too often physical harm, whether from an assault by others or an attempted/successful suicide. Although much work is being done to stop this victimization, much more work must be done.