



September 20, 2017

Betsy DeVos, U.S. Secretary of Education
Washington, DC
VIA EMAIL RE: Docket ID ED-2017-OS-0074

Dear Secretary DeVos,

As the community center that serves the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning people of the North Texas area, Resource Center believes that all students deserve an outstanding education and to feel safe and welcomed in their classrooms. When a school or a school district doesn't treat students fairly and allows discrimination, civil rights laws required the Department of Education to step in.

To make sure that schools understand what the law requires of them, and to make sure that everyone understands the protections students have, regulations (or rules) and guidance have been developed over the past several years to clarify the law. The Center supports our civil rights laws and these tools that help to make sure students receive the protections and supports they deserve.

Our education system is unfair to too many students and communities. Students who are LGBTQ, Black, Latino, Asian American, Native American, immigrants, English learners, girls, or students with disabilities face too many barriers to educational success. We need to use all the tools we can to change that problem and make sure ALL students get the education they deserve. Now is not the time to take these tools away or weaken them. I oppose any effort to rescind, modify or replace regulations and guidance that clarify our civil rights and education laws.

Here in Texas, according to the 2015 GLSEN School Climate Survey, 92% of students heard "gay" used in a negative way (down 3% since 2013) and 87% heard negative remarks about gender expression (up 7% since 2013). In addition, most LGBTQ students have been victimized at school & not reported it. The figure was 60% in 2015, up from 56% in 2013. It is the Title IX guidance established under the Obama Administration that provides some relief—and in turn, some hope—to LGBTQ students who find themselves marginalized in the classroom.

It's the Department of Education's job to help our nation's schools provide high-quality education for all students. We urge you not to roll-back these protections.

Sincerely,

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