



Dear Secretary DeVos,

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) is comprised of more than 50 organizations and groups across the country that are dedicated to preventing, responding to, and ending all forms of violence against LGBTQ and HIV affected communities. We strongly believe that all students deserve and are entitled to a quality education in an environment free of violence. Unfortunately, this is not a reality for many students with marginalized identities, especially students who identify as people of color, LGBTQ, immigrants, and Muslims. When a school or school district perpetrates or allows violence, civil rights laws require the Department of Education to step in. In order 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. We fully support our civil rights laws and these tools that help to make sure students receive the protections and supports they deserve. Which is why, **we oppose any effort to rescind, modify or replace regulations and guidance that clarify our civil rights and education laws.**

Through our community work, we know firsthand that LGBTQ students face extensive barriers to educational success. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published a report that found 17.8% of gay, lesbian, and bisexual high school students have been forced to have sexual intercourse compared to 5.4% of heterosexual high school students.<sup>1</sup> The largest national survey examining the experiences of transgender people in the U.S. found that 13% of respondents who were out or perceived as transgender in K-12 were sexually assaulted because of their gender identity.<sup>2</sup> This same report also found that 54% of Transgender K-12 students have experienced verbal harassment, and 24% were physically attacked. This violence and mistreatment was so pervasive that 17% of transgender students left a K-12 school, and 6% were expelled.<sup>2</sup> For transgender individuals who continued onto college or vocation school, 24% experienced verbal, physical, or sexual harassment during their high education experience.<sup>2</sup> The 2015 AAU Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct determined that 21% of TGQN (transgender, genderqueer, and non-conforming) college students have been sexually assaulted, compared to 18% of non-TGQN females, and 4% of non-TGQN males. Any rollback of Title IX protections for student survivors will undoubtedly serve to undermine the dignity of LGBTQ student survivors, making it dangerous to report violence and drastically altering the way they experience their school environments.

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,

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs

<sup>1</sup>Kann, L., Olsen, E.O., McManus, T., Harris, W.A., Shanklin, S.L., Flint, K.H. ... Zaza, S. (2015). Sexual identity, sex of sexual contacts, and health-related behaviors among students in grades 9 – 12 – United States and selected sites, 2015. *MMWR Surveill Summ*, 65(9): 16.

<sup>2</sup>James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M. (2016). *The report of the 2015 U.S. transgender survey*. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality.

<sup>3</sup>Cantor, D., Fisher, B., Chibnall, S., Townsend, R., Lee, H., Bruce, C., & Thomas, G. (2015). *Report on the AAU campus climate survey on sexual assault and sexual misconduct*. Rockville, MD: The Association of American Universities.