

## Georgia Coalition for Education Justice Supports LGBTQ+ Students

*February 21, 2024*

We, the undersigned members of the [Georgia Coalition for Education Justice](#), an organization of more than 200 students, parents, teachers, educators, and advocates, denounce the Georgia General Assembly's continued attacks on LGBTQ+ students in our schools. As an organization committed to promoting inclusivity, diversity, and equity in education across the state of Georgia, we believe it is imperative to advocate for the rights and well-being of all students.

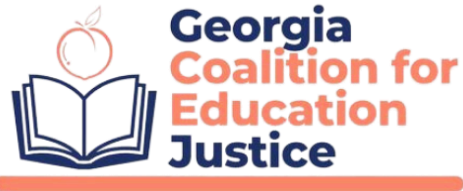
It is essential to recognize that transgender and non-binary students have the same rights as their peers to access quality education in a safe and supportive learning environment. Any legislation that seeks to marginalize or exclude these students undermines their dignity, autonomy, and right to equal treatment under the law.

A CDC study on youth behavior recently showed that affirming and inclusive school environments positively impact the academic achievement, mental health, and overall well-being of students (Wilkins et al., 2021). It has also been shown that targeted interventions to support LGBTQ+ and transgender students lowered rates of bullying and violence for LGBTQ+ students *and* their heterosexual peers (Clayton et al., 2021; Kaczkowski, 2022).

We stand united in our opposition to the following bills in the state legislature and ask our **state legislators to vote NO** on these harmful bills that contribute to the increasingly hostile environment toward trans and nonbinary students and would make Georgia public schools less safe for all students.

- [Senate Bill 88](#) sponsored by Sen. Carden Summers (R-13)
- [Senate Bill 438](#) sponsored by Sen. Carden Summers (R-13)
- [House Bill 836](#) sponsored by Chairman Mitchell Scoggins (R-14)
- [House Bill 936](#) sponsored by Chairman Josh Bonner (R-73)
- [House Bill 1045](#) sponsored by Rep. David Clark (R-100)

It is incumbent upon us as educators, policymakers, and advocates to create safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environments where all students can thrive and reach their full potential.



We call on our state's education leaders to cease their persecution of one of our most vulnerable student populations and instead focus on passing legislation that creates safe, nurturing learning environments that actively promote inclusive curricula and educational materials that reflect the diversity of human experiences and identities. This should include implementing comprehensive anti-bullying and anti-discrimination policies, providing training and resources for staff on LGBTQ+-inclusive practices, establishing support groups and safe spaces for LGBTQ+ students, and ensuring access to affirming and culturally-competent mental health services. These educational practices represent our best chance to support students as they become engaged, compassionate, and capable citizens capable of creating success for themselves, our state, and the world.

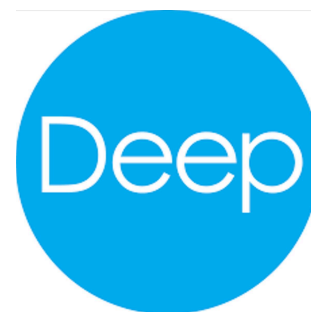
For questions, please contact Mikayla Arciaga, MA.Ed., at [mikayla.arciaga@idra.org](mailto:mikayla.arciaga@idra.org).

*The Georgia Coalition for Education Justice, coordinated by IDRA, is a coalition of students, educators, parents, and advocates committed to advancing education justice for all children across the state.*

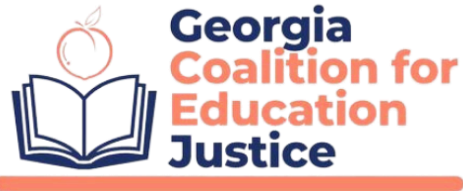
#### Sources

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- Kaczowski, W., Li, J., Cooper, A., & Robin, L. (2022). Examining the relationship between LGBTQ-supportive school health policies and practices and psychosocial health outcomes of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual students. *LGBT Health* 2022;9:43–53. <https://doi.org/10.1089/lgbt.2021.0133> PMID:34935516
- Wilkins, N., Krause, K., Verlenden, J., et al. (2021). School Connectedness and Risk Behaviors and Experiences Among High School Students — Youth Risk Behavior Survey, United States. *MMWR Suppl* 2023,72(1), 13–21. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.su7201a2>

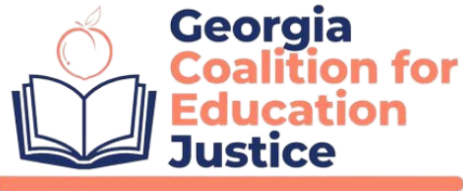
Signed,



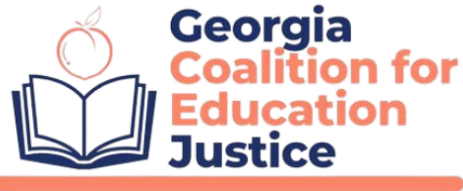




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JordanBlack, Parent - Gwinnett  
Margaret Bray, Educator  
Nan Brown, Parent, Educator - Fulton County  
Darian Burns,Community Advocate, Policy Analyst - Dekalb  
Shelley Callico, Community Advocate, Parent - Cobb County  
Jennifer Carpenter, Parent, Professor, Community Advocate - Gwinnett County Schools  
Thomas Chapel, Parent, Atlanta  
Harry Chiu, Community Advocate  
Leah Clancy, Grandparent - Gwinnett County  
Michelle Clark, Parent - Oconee County  
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Thomas Cox, Parent, K12 Teacher - Gwinnett County  
Alison Cundiff, Educator - DeKalb County  
Amanda Dannemiller, Parent - Gwinnett County  
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Sheila Levy, Parent - DeKalb County  
Kerrie Lynn, Educator - Decatur  
Jennifer Mason, Educator - Gwinnett County  
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Erin Murphy, Parent, Community Advocate - Gwinnett County  
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Catherine Nunziata, Parent - Forsyth County  
Ogechi Oparah, Community Advocate - Fayette County  
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Matéo Penado  
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Anna Purcella-Doll, Educator - Forsyth County  
Randall Ramirez, Parent  
Emily Ramirez, Parent  
Michael Ray, Educator, Administrator - Atlanta Public Schools  
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Laura Ross, Administrator - Gwinnett County  
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Melissa Schellenberg, Parent, Educator - Gwinnett County  
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Beverly Wynne, Community Advocate - Cobb County

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