

ANTI-LGBT

VIOLENCE

STOP

the

HATE

Suicides by LGBT Youth

When 18-year-old gay Rutgers student Tyler Clementi jumped off the George Washington Bridge on September 22, 2010, he meant to kill himself. He did not know that he would spark a national uproar. But Clementi's death, along with a series of ensuing LGBT teen suicides, has prompted an intense conversation over the problem of anti-LGBT bullying. Dan Savage's "It Gets Better Project," a video campaign aimed at LGBT teens, has prompted heartfelt contributions from individuals like President Obama and groups like the Boston Red Sox.



But gay suicide is **hardly** a new problem — and, some would argue, anti-LGBT prejudice is on the decline in U.S. culture. So why are we suddenly so concerned? Simply put, **anti-LGBT prejudice remains a pervasive problem in U.S. schools**. Despite tremendous legal strides over the past two decades, LGBT students are still punished more severely than their non-LGBT counterparts, their pleas for help are often ignored, and, most surprisingly, many LGBT teachers still feel enormous pressure to remain in the closet for fear of reprisals from principals, school boards, and parents.

The Statistics

- ✓ 29% of LGBT students missed at least one class and 30% missed at least one day of school in the past month because of safety concerns, compared to only 8% and 7%, respectively, of a national sample of secondary school students.



- ✓ The reported grade point average of students who were more frequently harassed because of their sexual orientation or gender expression was almost half a grade lower than for students who were harassed less frequently (2.7 vs. 3.1).
- ✓ 72% of LGBT students have heard anti-LGBT remarks, such as "faggot" or "dyke," often at school.

- ✓ 85% of the students reported being verbally harassed, 40% reported being physically harassed, and 19% reported being physically assaulted at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation.
- ✓ 64% of the students reported being verbally harassed, 27% reported being physically harassed, and 13% reported being physically assaulted at school in the past year because of their gender expression.

- ✓ Increased levels of victimization were related to increased levels of depression and anxiety and to decreased levels of self-esteem.
- ✓ Being out in school had both positive and negative repercussions for LGBT students. Being known as LGBT was related to higher levels of victimization, but also to higher levels of psychological well-being.

Source: GLSEN, *The 2009 National School Climate Survey*

States With Laws Protecting LGB or LGBT Youth in Schools

California

Colorado

Connecticut*

District of Columbia

Illinois

Iowa

Maine

Massachusetts*

Minnesota

New Hampshire

New Jersey

Oregon

Vermont

Washington

Wisconsin*

***Covers just LGB students**

34 states have NO protection for LGBT youth

States that Prohibit Positive Portrayal of Homosexuality in Schools

- Alabama
- Arizona
- Mississippi
- Oklahoma
- South Carolina
- Texas
- Utah

Proposed Federal Legislation: Student Non-Discrimination Act

- Nondiscrimination laws protect students from discrimination, including forms of bullying and harassment, on the basis of race and sex. However, there is no law extending these protections to victims of anti-LGBT discrimination and, as a result, they have fewer legal options through which to seek redress.
- A bill before Congress (H.R. 4530 / S. 3990) would add LGBT students to the groups protected by discrimination laws to help ensure that every child has access to a quality education free from bullying and harassment.

Proposed Federal Legislation: Safe Schools Improvement Act

- This bill would amend the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act to add programs to prevent bullying and harassment in schools. The bill would require schools to have anti-bullying policies and to develop intervention strategies to help school personnel better address instances of bullying and harassment.
- In addition, schools would be required to report instances of bullying and harassment so that the extent of the problem can be understood.

What Can You Do?

- Get involved! Educate yourself on LGBT issues
 - Attend events sponsored by the Stonewall Center and other LGBT organizations.
- Challenge people who make anti-LGBT jokes or comments (like “that’s so gay”).
- Encourage your Senators and Congressional representative to sponsor legislation that supports LGBT youth.
- Educate others and encourage them to get involved too.