

Requiring educators to out LGBTQ+ students to their parents/guardians could have serious negative consequences for the well-being of these young people. You are putting lives at risk with this bill. For the party that touts its “pro-life” stance, this doesn’t make sense.

Research has shown that LGBTQ+ youth who face rejection from their families experience significantly higher rates of mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. A 2019 study found that LGBTQ+ youth who were rejected by their families were more than 8 times as likely to attempt suicide compared to those who were accepted (Ryan, 2019).

Furthermore, laws and policies that force teachers to disclose a student's LGBTQ+ identity have been linked to increases in mental health risks for transgender and non-binary youth. A study analyzing the impact of anti-transgender laws between 2018 and 2022 found that such laws were associated with a 7-72% increase in suicide attempts among transgender and non-binary youth aged 13-17 (Pace, 2023). There’s a huge difference between 7-72%, but even if it’s only 1% it really matters if we’re talking about a kid you know and love.

In contrast, when LGBTQ+ students have the option to confide in supportive educators and mental health professionals without fear of mandatory disclosure, they are more likely to feel safe and supported. Protecting the privacy of students and fostering a supportive environment at school are key to improving their mental health and academic success.

In conclusion, requiring teachers to out LGBTQ+ students jeopardizes their safety and well-being, especially when family rejection could lead to increased emotional and psychological distress. Instead, schools should focus on creating affirming, supportive spaces where students can feel safe expressing their identities.

Sources:

- Ryan, C. (2019). *Family Acceptance Project: Understanding the Impact of Family Rejection on LGBTQ Youth*. San Francisco State University.
- Pace, L. (2023). *The Mental Health Impact of Anti-Transgender Laws on Youth*. American Journal of Public Health.