



LGBTQIA+ Students Across Virginia Condemn Bigoted Guidelines

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Contact: general@prideliberation.org

FAIRFAX, VA - On September 16th, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) released its revised [model transgender policies](#). Passed in 2020, the model transgender policies were intended to protect Queer students against discrimination. These new revisions betray the original intent of the law, instead attacking LGBTQIA+ students across Virginia.

The VDOE's revisions include:

- Banning transgender students from using restrooms that align with their gender identity.
- Prohibiting school districts from protecting closeted students.
- Requiring school districts to forcibly out students.
- Banning gender neutral pronouns.
- Allowing people to maliciously deadname and misgender students.
- Allowing parents to deny a student access to school counseling services, regardless of the student's wishes and mental health.
- Removing provisions that required school districts to minimize gender segregation in extracurriculars and train school mental health professionals on supporting LGBTQIA+ students.
- Prohibiting students from socially transitioning and expressing their gender identity.

"As a closeted student, I wouldn't be able to come home if my parents found out that I was Queer. I am terrified that these draft regulations will take away one of the few places I can just be myself," said one student from Fairfax County.

"School is one of the few places where my Queer friends and I can feel safe to be ourselves. Turning that affirming space into a place of fear and bigotry is abhorrent and only hurts students," said another LGBTQIA+ student from Prince William County.

These revised guidelines will only hurt students in a time when students are facing unparalleled mental health challenges, and are a cruel attempt to politicize the existence of LGBTQIA+ students for political gain. **We call for the VDOE to revoke its draft revisions and for school boards to affirm their commitment to protect all students by rejecting these bigoted proposed guidelines.**

The Pride Liberation Project is a 200+ member student-run group of Queer and allied students in Virginia who advocate for the rights of LGBTQIA+ students. Representatives of the Pride Liberation Project have testified at School Board meetings and the General Assembly, and the organization continues to lobby local and state governments to promote the interests of LGBTQIA+ students.

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