



## Equality Indiana Urges Defeat of Anti-LGBTQ Bill, HB 1608

**March 21, 2023** – Equality Indiana joins fellow Hoosiers and community outrage to oppose Anti-LGBTQ House Bill 1608, a “Don’t Say Gay” and “Forced Outing” bill. We urge ‘No’ votes on HB 1608 by Indiana Senate members.

We oppose this legislation or any bill that would ban educators from talking about LGBTQ issues or people and undermine protections for LGBTQ youth in schools, which should be safe spaces for all students, regardless of gender identity, race, or sexual orientation.

This legislation will stigmatize LGBTQ people, isolate and ostracize LGBTQ youth, and strike fear in teachers who should be providing safe and inclusive classrooms. The existence of LGBTQ students, parents, school staff, and curriculum topics should not be a forbidden subject that has to be regulated by the Indiana General Assembly.

Indiana Lawmakers should be focusing on legislation that would strengthen our public educational institutions, not legislation that will have a chilling effect on 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment rights of speech and expression. Indiana should be a welcoming state to diverse business entities, workers, and families. HB 1608 will do the opposite and could negatively impact Indiana’s economic future.

Equality Indiana is a nonpartisan, grassroots, nonprofit organization with a mission to secure comprehensive and inclusive nondiscrimination, equality, and related legal protections for all LGBTQ Hoosiers. We will always stand with and demand equal protections for LGBTQ students and educators, regardless of age, beliefs, citizenship status, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, marital status, nationality, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

Equality Indiana’s goals include engaging LGBTQ Hoosiers and our allies, families, and friends to take bold actions to prevent anti-LGBTQ legislation, like HB 1608, from becoming law and we urge its defeat.

Equality Indiana’s mission demands that we engage, empower, and energize Hoosier voters to take action in future elections by educating voters about lawmakers’ legislative voting records concerning LGBTQ and related issues. Legislative voting records that include affirmative votes on anti-LGBTQ legislation, like HB 1608, will identify each of those legislators as an anti-LGBTQ public official. Equality Indiana will strongly urge the defeat of all anti-LGBTQ public officials or candidates running for elective office.

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