

# YOUTH & YOU

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer  
and Questioning Youth

## House Committee on Education Presentation

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# What does HB 2261 propose to do?

- **ORS. 417.847** establishes the Youth Development Council for the purpose of overseeing a unified system of services to school-aged children through youth 24 years of age in a manner that supports educational success, focuses on crime prevention, reduces high risk behaviors and is integrated, measurable and accountable.
- **HB 2261** expands allowed responsibilities of Youth Development Council to include coordinating statewide services for youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning.

# Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) Youth – Oregon Estimates

- More than 7 % of youth in the U.S. ages 12-17 identify as a sexual minority, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.
- The latest Oregon Healthy Teens Survey shows that in 2015, about 12% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders and 11.3% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders identified themselves as either lesbian, gay, bisexual or questioning.

# 2016 Oregon Student Wellness Survey

- The *Oregon Student Wellness Survey* is an anonymous and voluntary survey sponsored by the Oregon Health Authority in collaboration with the Oregon Department of Education.
- The 2015-2016 final weighted dataset for the *Oregon Student Wellness Survey* consisted of 57,742 surveys collected from 35 counties, 116 public school districts, and 414 schools:

Gender/Sexual Orientation (SO)	Grade 11
Transgender	0.8%
Other gender	1.5%
Gay or Lesbian	1.7%
Bisexual	6.3%
Queer	1.1%
Other Sexual Orient. (SO)	1.9%
Not sure SO	2.5%

# LGBTQ Youth and Schools

- Negative attitudes toward LGBTQ youth put them at increased risk for experiences with violence compared with other students including behaviors such as bullying, teasing, harassment, physical assault, and suicide-related behaviors.
- LGBTQ students who report high levels of victimization at school also have higher rates of truancy, lower grade point averages, higher levels of depression, lower self-esteem and fewer plans for secondary education.
- Some national studies' data show that schools administer sanctions to non-heterosexual youth, particularly girls, that are harsher than those administered to heterosexual youth and are disproportionate to their misbehavior .

# Suicide Risk Factors: Bullying

2015 Oregon Healthy Teens Survey question:  
**Have you been bullied at school in the past 30 days?**

	Yes
Lesbian or gay	44.6%
Straight	22.7%
Bisexual	51.3%
Something else (Q)	42.1%
Do not know/not sure	35.2%

# Suicide Risk Factors: Harassment

The Oregon Student Wellness Survey from years 2011-2016 show the percent of youth who experienced harassment in school in the last 30 days related to being gay, bisexual or transgender:

Grade	2011-12	2013-14	2015-16
6	16.0 %	12.9 %	13.3%
8	13.7%	12.3 %	12.8%
11	8.0%	7.0%	7.3%

# 2013 National School Climate Survey Results

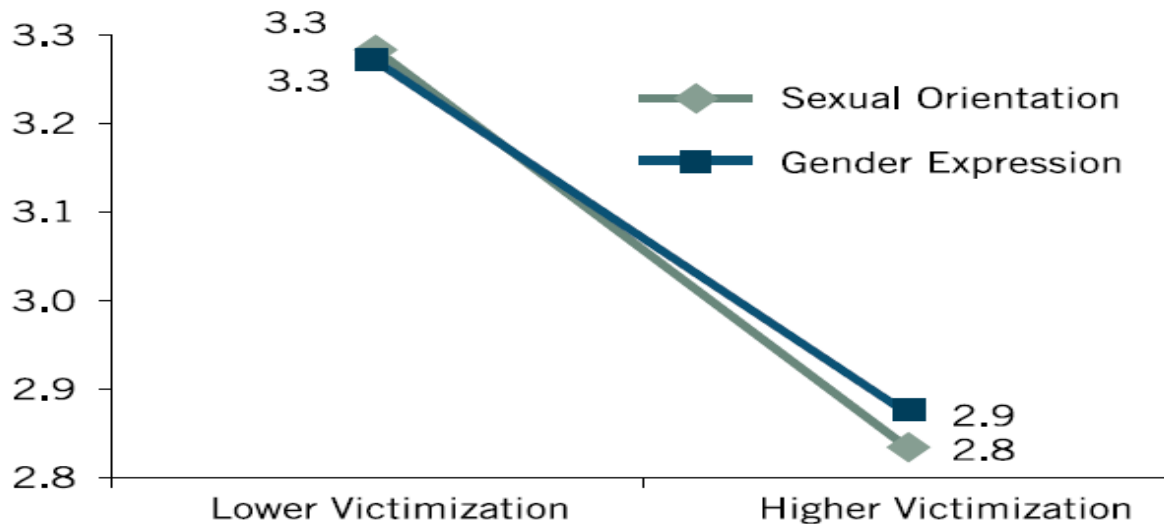
- **85.4% of LGBT** students reported being verbally harassed, while **39.3%** reported being physically harassed at school in the past year based on personal characteristics.
- **55.5% of LGBT** students reported feeling unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation.
- **30.3% of LGBT** students reported missing an entire day of school and **10.6%** reported being chronically absent in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable at school.



# 2013 National School Climate Survey Results, continued

**57.9% of LGBT** students who reported that they do not plan to graduate or are unsure if they will graduate indicated their reason was a hostile or unsupportive school environment.

**Figure 1.26 Academic Achievement and Severity of Victimization**  
(LGBT Students' Mean Reported Grade Point Average)



# 2015 National Transgender Discrimination Survey

**2015 National Transgender Discrimination Survey** is the largest survey examining the experiences of transgender people in the United States, with **27,715** respondents from all fifty states, D.C., U.S. territories and military bases overseas

- **40%** of respondents reported attempting suicide in their lifetime – nearly nine times the attempted suicide rate in the U.S. population (4.6%)
- **47%** of respondents were sexually assaulted at some point in their lifetime

## **While in school (K-12)**

- **54%** reported being verbally harassed while in school
- **24 %** were physically attacked and **13%** were sexually assaulted
- **17%** experienced such severe mistreatment that they left school as a result

<http://www.ustranssurvey.org/>

# Transgender Youth and Civil Rights in Oregon

On May 5, 2016, the Oregon Department of Education issued a guidance to school districts:

## *Creating a Safe and Supportive School Environment for Transgender Students*

In addition to Title IX the federal Education Amendment of 1972 regulations, under Oregon law “...[a] person may not be subjected to discrimination in any public elementary, secondary or community college education program or service, school or interschool activity or in any higher education program or service, school or interschool activity where the program, service, school or activity is financed in whole or in part by moneys appropriated by the Legislative Assembly.” (Oregon Revised Statutes 659.850, 2013)

# Oregon Students and Civil Rights

“I stand by the Oregon Department of Education which remains committed to ensuring all students are provided an education regardless of gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or protected classes. Regardless of federal guidance, Oregon law continues to provide protections for all students”.

–Governor Kate Brown

# What can be done to prevent youth suicide?

**The 2016-2020 Youth Suicide Intervention and Prevention Plan** developed by the Oregon Health Authority Health Systems Division acknowledges that risk of suicide is especially acute among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth.

[http://www.oregon.gov/oha/amh/docs/Youth\\_Suicide\\_Intervention\\_and\\_Prevention\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/oha/amh/docs/Youth_Suicide_Intervention_and_Prevention_Plan.pdf)

While LGBTQ youth are at high risk for suicide, some subgroups are particularly at high risk, including those who are homeless, runaways, living in foster care, or involved with the juvenile justice system.

# LGBTQ Youth and Child Welfare

- LGBT youth enter the foster care system for many of the same reasons as non-LGBT youth in care, such as abuse, neglect, and parental substance abuse.
- But many LGBT youth have an added layer of trauma that comes with being rejected or mistreated because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.
- The unacceptable reality is that LGBT youth – after facing trauma and maltreatment from their families or caregivers – too often enter a foster care system that is ill-equipped to competently meet their needs and subjects them to further bias and discrimination.

# LGBTQ Youth and Child Welfare

- Research shows LGBT youth are more than twice as likely as their non-LGBT peers to report being treated poorly by the foster care system.\*
- A survey of LGBT youth in out-of-home care in New York City found:
  - 78% of LGBT youth were removed or ran away from their foster placements as a result of hostility toward their sexual orientation or gender identity
  - 100% of LGBT youth in group homes reported verbal harassment
  - 70% of LGBT youth reported physical violence in group homes

\*U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services Administration on Children, Youth and Families, 2011.

# LGBTQ Youth and Homelessness

- Nationally, 1.6 million youth experience homelessness each year.
  - The statistics for LGBT homeless youth are even more shocking, as this group represents up to 40% of all young people experiencing homelessness.
  - Considering LGBT youth represent an estimated 7% of the total youth population, these numbers are disproportionately high.
- LGBT youth experience homelessness for a variety of other reasons: the intersection of homophobia and transphobia, poverty, and failed systems.
  - Additional reasons include family issues, aging out of the foster care system, family poverty, and abuse in the home.



# LGBTQ Youth and Juvenile Justice

- Social stigma, family rejection and discrimination subject these youth to increased risk of substance use, homelessness, school dropout or push-out, depression and suicidality.
- Many LGBTQ youth in the juvenile justice system are arrested for committing non-violent survival crimes such as prostitution and shoplifting and likely living on the streets at the time of the offense.
- Research shows up to 20% of the youth in America's juvenile detention facilities identify as LGBT, questioning or gender nonconforming, which is almost three times their estimated number in the general population.

# Developing Policies for LGBTQ Youth in Oregon

- County juvenile departments around Oregon are developing policies and will implement best practices for LGB and/or transgender youth in their care.
- Oregon Youth Authority has developed policy and protocols addressing the needs of transgender youth in their custody.
- *Providing Unbiased Services for LGBT Youth Project* from Multnomah County focuses on training staff and encouraging policy changes to provide unbiased services for LGBT youth in in-home and out-of-home care settings.
  - The collaboration has focused on out-of-home care including juvenile justice detention, foster care placements, and homeless shelters.

# Key Findings

- Being LGBTQ is not the cause of negative outcomes. Instead, systems are not adequately serving LGBTQ youth.
- The often-repeated, fundamental issue confronting the ability to provide services to LGBTQ youth in Oregon: *“There is a lack of data in this area.”*
  - One reason is that youth often don’t feel safe disclosing their sexual or gender preference.
  - When available, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth are often lumped together as one category, therefore not capturing the distinct experiences of each population.

# Recommendations to Provide Greater Support and Care of LGBTQ Youth

- There is the need to develop state, local and agency policies and practices supporting the establishment of safe and supportive environments for LGBTQ youth.
- A statewide coordinated systems' response is needed to address the needs of these youth.
- Statewide policies, practices and funding to support LGBTQ youth must be developed.
- State agencies must provide training in the competent, non-discriminatory, and respectful treatment of these youth.

# Youth Development Council: LGBTQ Youth Coordination

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