

Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing in support of SB 52 which would require development and implementation of a statewide plan to help LGBTQ+ students be more successful in school.

This is a very important and necessary step. While the pandemic has many increasingly worried about students in need of mental health assistance and being at risk of suicide due to feelings of isolation, those feelings of isolation are not new to many LGBTQ+ students who do not have a good system of support. One year in my district, previous to the pandemic, we had four student suicides at our high school. At least two of those losses were students who identified as LGBTQ+. This is unacceptable and we must do something to protect these young lives.

I have also anecdotally heard from LGBTQ+ students who feel relieved to be attending school virtually and not have to deal with the daily harassment and bullying they experience when attending school in person.

We must not continue to exclude these students from feeling safe and being respected for who they are in our school communities. They deserve a chance to grow up and be themselves.

Please move SB 52 forward.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Kathleen Jeskey  
Canby