



**BILL:** HB 14 - County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

**DATE:** April 1, 2026

**POSITION:** Favorable

**COMMITTEE:** Education, Energy, and the Environment

Glisten(formerly GLSEN) Maryland, the state chapter of the largest advocate for LGBTQ+ issues in K–12 education, supports HB 627. For more than 34 years, our organization has worked to ensure that every student can learn in safe, inclusive, and affirming school environments. The passage of this bill will help foster safe educational settings for all Marylanders by creating processes for accountability and transparency for acts of bullying, harassment, and intimidation of LGBTQIA+ youth.

Research by GLSEN National<sup>1</sup> finds that **LGBTQ+ students experience high rates of bullying, harassment, and intimidation**, with 83% reporting feeling unsafe at school. **LGBTQ+ students of color are most likely to experience bullying, harassment, and intimidation** at school.

Experiencing a hostile school climate is associated with greater rates of absenteeism, lower GPA, lower graduation rates, and being less likely to go on to college (GLSEN, 2021). Thus, **it is in the best interest of students and our broader community to create supportive school climates for LGBTQ+ youth.**

Creating clear bullying, harassment, and intimidation reporting mechanisms which are inclusive of LGBTQIA+ students provide an opportunity for Maryland school systems to document these incidents in our public schools. Making data on the number of reports received publicly available ensures that parents and guardians have critical information about the climate in their children's schools.

Perhaps most importantly, **collecting information on bullying, harassment, and intimidation of LGBTQIA+ students in schools serves a preventative function, working to improve school climate.** Further research also finds that school policies which explicitly protect LGBTQIA+ youth are safer for LGBTQIA+ students

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<sup>1</sup> Kosciw, J. G., Clark, C. M., & Menard, L. (2022). The 2021 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of LGBTQ+ youth in our nation's schools. New York: GLSEN.

in comparison to schools with generic anti-bullying and harassment policies<sup>2</sup>.

Accordingly, Glisten Maryland respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** committee report on HB 14, and strongly urges the committee to return the legislation as closely as possible to its original form to preserve its intent and effectiveness.

**ABOUT GLISTEN:**

Glisten (previously GLSEN), the nation's largest advocate for LGBTQ+ issues in K-12 education, has been dedicated to establishing inclusive schools and learning environments for over 34 years. Amidst increasing threats against LGBTQ+ youth nationwide, Glisten actively addresses harassment and discrimination by empowering educators, advocating for policy changes, and combating book bans.

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<sup>2</sup> Kull, Ryan & Greytak, Emily & Kosciw, Joseph & Villenas, Christian. (2016). Effectiveness of School District Antibullying Policies in Improving LGBT Youths' School Climate. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*. 3. 407-415. 10.1037/sgd0000196.