

## **Ways and Means Committee**

### **HB 14 Favorable with Amendment**

Dear Chairperson Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark and Members of the Ways and Means Committee

We are members of the Coalition for LGBTQ+ Students; our mission is to provide support for LGBTQIA youth through education, policy and advocacy.

We are urging you to give a favorable vote for HB 14, with an amendment outlined below. Currently, the public doesn't have access to specific information about bullying, harassment, and bias incidents in our public schools. It is essential that this data be made public.

In our role as advocates for LGBTQIA youth, we hear of numerous examples of LGBTQIA students being targeted specifically because of their gender identity or orientation. For example, students have reported being told they should die, being pushed and shoved, having personal property like pride symbols destroyed, and being verbally harassed with homophobic slurs. Some students leave school or are scared to attend school because they do not feel safe. Research shows that the majority of middle and high school students who are LGBTQIA report being bullied or harassed in school <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>.

HB 14 is essential because it helps the community know better what types of risks are present in their schools. Parents and students need this knowledge so they can make safe decisions regarding their children's schooling. Community leaders, BOE reps, elected officials and SROs need this information so they can do their jobs effectively.

#### **HB 14 Proposed Amendment**

Each county website will report the number and type of bullying and harassment incidents that occur at each school. This will provide important information for families, schools, elected officials and lawmakers as they make choices about which school district to reside in, and what interventions are needed in different schools and communities.

**We strongly urge you to give a favorable report to HB 14 with the proposed amendment.**

Sincerely,

The Coalition for LGBTQ+ Students (Facilitator -- Abbie Ellicott)

