



June 12, 2024

The Honorable Mike Fong
 Chair, Assembly Higher Education Committee
 1021 O Street, Room 173
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Senate Bill 1491 (Eggman) – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Fong,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write in strong support of SB 1491 by Senator Susan Eggman, which will help to promote greater inclusivity in higher education and provide much-needed support to 2SLGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff at both public and private colleges and universities across the state.

Many 2SLGBTQ+ students experience discrimination and harassment in higher education, which can negatively impact their academic success and overall well-being. According to the U.S. Transgender Survey, a survey of over 27,000 transgender adults, nearly one-quarter (24%) of respondents who were out or perceived as transgender in college reported being verbally, physically, or sexually harassed – with 16% of those who experienced harassment having left college because the harassment was so bad. Transgender students of color were more likely to report leaving school for that reason.

SB 1491 will require public colleges and universities to designate an employee at each of their respective campuses to address the needs of 2SLGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff, and publish the designee's name and contact information in public facing materials for students. Given that a majority of community and state colleges currently lack designated points of contact for 2SLGBTQ+ students, the bill will help to ensure that every institution has a designated point of contact where students can freely express themselves and seek support without fear of discrimination or retaliation.

Additionally, the bill will update existing law requiring colleges and universities to openly acknowledge any Title IX exemptions granted to them. Title IX is a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in federally funded educational institutions, including colleges and universities. Many students are unaware when their college or university is exempt from Title IX and what the potential consequences might be in the event their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression does not align with the university's discriminatory policies. SB 1491 will require the Student Aid Commission to provide a written notice to students who receive state financial aid regarding whether their postsecondary educational institution claims a religious exemption to federal non-discrimination protections and their right to report discrimination to the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights.

By updating the Equity in Higher Education Act, we can help to eliminate barriers that prevent 2SLGBTQ+ students from reaching the highest levels of academic and professional achievement. SB 1491 will not only provide direct benefits to 2SLGBTQ+ students, but also contribute to a more inclusive and

diverse academic community, enriching the educational experience for all. For these and more, our organizations strongly support SB 1491 and respectfully request your "AYE" vote when it comes before you in committee.

Sincerely,



Tony Hoang
Executive Director
Equality California



Irene Kao
Executive Director
Courage California



Nicole Kristal
Executive Director
Still Bisexual



Tim Schuh
Treasurer
TransYouth Liberation



Bill Holzhauer
Director of Outreach/Events
Transgender Health & Wellness
Center



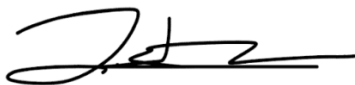
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Uyen Hoang
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Evan Minton
CA State Senior Policy &
Programmatic Manager
Voices for Progress



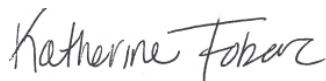
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The Diversity Center of Santa Cruz
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Rev Benita Ramsey
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Rainbow Pride Youth Alliance



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Jesus Jacuinde-Torres
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cc: The Honorable Susan Eggman, Author
The Honorable Members, Assembly Higher Education Committee