



An Initiative of Minnesota Alliance With Youth

April 4, 2023

Dear Representative Hanson and authors of HF368, HF1016, and SF366,

Thank you for your continued focus on amplifying youth voices and making Minnesota schools a safer space for all students. As we continue to see loopholes emerge in anti-bullying policies around the state, the Minnesota Youth Council greatly appreciates your commitment to addressing the issues facing students every day.

We recognize the many students who came forward with stories of the harassment and abuse they endured in their schools and the countless others with similar experiences. The current anti-bullying policies in the state fail to capture the scope of harassment based on a protected class and are often confusing and inaccessible for students to navigate. Creating policies specific to these situations and conspicuously posting them around schools better protects students and informs them of their rights. Addressing malicious conduct based on race, gender, sexuality, disability, and other protected classes are essential to addressing the concerns of students across Minnesota. The distinction between malicious and sadistic conduct and bullying is also very important, as it gives students an understanding of the severity of the damage caused by this harmful behavior, while also holding everyone in schools accountable, whether they be students, teachers, faculty, or administration.

This legislation is the first step in a longer process to listen to the concerns of students and hold districts accountable for preventing this behavior in our schools. In addition to setting these guidelines for schools, we must also work to inform families and communities about the resources available to them. For those already facing extreme harassment and abuse in their school environment, reaching out for help should not become an additional barrier. Making the process of reporting abuse outside of their district accessible and well-understood through agencies like the Minnesota Department of Human Rights is essential to enforcing these policies statewide.

We appreciate your continued focus on the health and well-being of students across the state and strongly support this legislation.

Sincerely,
The Minnesota Youth Council

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