



BOB CASEY

FIGHTING for PENNSYLVANIA FAMILIES

The Safe Schools Improvement Act

U.S. Senator Bob Casey

Bullying and harassment of students is widespread, can negatively impact a child's physical and mental health, and promote poor academic, attendance, and graduation outcomes. The Safe Schools Improvement Act is designed to help schools address this problem and promote a positive school climate by ensuring that no child is afraid to go to school for fear of unchecked bullying and harassment.

What is the Safe Schools Improvement Act?

- Requires schools and districts receiving federal funding to specifically prohibit bullying and harassment, including conduct based on a student's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics), disability, or religion.
- Requires schools and school districts to provide annual notice to parents, students, and educational professionals on prohibited conduct and grievance procedures for students or parents to register bullying or harassment complaints.
- Supports the efforts of schools and school districts to focus on prevention programs with proven effectiveness in order to better prevent and respond to incidents of bullying and harassment both in school and online.

Why is this needed?

- While there are federal laws to provide support to promote school safety, there is currently no federal law in place to comprehensively and expressly address issues of bullying or harassment.
- According to the 2019 National Crime Victimization Survey School Crime Supplement, 22 percent of students aged 12-18 reported being bullied at schools. Female students, multiracial students, and students in rural incidences experienced higher bullying incidences.
- According to a 2021 National School Climate Survey by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), the majority (83.1%) of LGBTQ+ students experienced harassment or assault in the past year based on personal characteristics, more than one-third (34.4%) were victimized at school based on their actual or perceived disability and more than a quarter of students (29%) based on religion.