



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on July 17, 2024

California Law Bans Schools From Disclosing Students' Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation to Parents

California has become the first U.S. state to prohibit school districts from requiring staff to notify parents about their child's gender identification or sexual orientation without the child's consent. Governor Gavin Newsom signed [Assembly Bill No. 1955](#) (dubbed "Support Academic Futures and Educators for Today's Youth Act (SAFETY Act)) into law on Monday, sparking heated reactions from both proponents and critics.

The law, ostensibly aimed at protecting the privacy of LGBTQ students, bans school policies that mandate teachers and staff to disclose a student's gender identity or sexual orientation to anyone without the child's permission. The prohibition covers school districts, county offices of education, charter schools, and state special schools, or, in other words, any educational institution that receives, or benefits from, state financial assistance, or enrolls pupils who receive state student financial aid, according to the bill.



AP Images
Gavin Newsom

Support

"This law helps keep children safe while protecting the critical role of parents," Brandon Richards, a spokesperson for Governor Newsom, [reportedly stated](#). "It prevents politicians and school staff from inappropriately intervening in family matters and attempting to control if, when, and how families have deeply personal conversations."

The California Department of Education [celebrated](#) the new law. State Superintendent Tony Thurmond emphasized that it ensures a "safe and supportive learning environment" for LGBTQ students, protects their privacy, prevents bullying, harassment, and discrimination, and allows families to handle personal matters without school intervention.

The legislation follows several local school districts in California, such as the [Chino Valley Unified School District](#) and the [Anderson Union High School District](#), implementing policies that required parental notification if a student sought to change their gender identity. These policies have been met with significant resistance from Democratic state officials.

Newsom's press office actively refuted criticisms on X posts on Monday, which accused the new legislation of enabling schools to conceal children's gender identities from their parents, contending that the bill would not prevent parents and children from discussing sexual matters on their own. The



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office also clarified that while the new law “DOES NOT allow teachers & school districts to hide information from parents, it ensures educators & staff are not forced to forcibly out a student’s LGBTQ identity absent a request for records & without the student’s consent.”

Finally, the office reminded that the Golden State still respects parental consent in cases when children decide to undergo “transgender” procedures, writing, “NOTE: Under California law, minors cannot legally change their name or gender WITHOUT parental consent & parents are GUARANTEED the right to access their students’ educational records.”

Critics

In response to the new law, the Chino Valley Unified School District and several parents filed a lawsuit against Governor Newsom, arguing that the law violates parents’ rights under the U.S. Constitution.

“School officials do not have the right to keep secrets from parents, but parents do have a constitutional right to know what their minor children are doing at school,” said Emily Rae, a lawyer representing the district, according to the *Associated Press* [report](#).

The report referenced Newsom spokesperson Izzy Gardon, who dismissed the lawsuit as “deeply unserious” and reiterated that the law “preserves the child-parent relationship” while ensuring minors cannot legally change their name or gender without parental consent and maintaining parents’ access to educational records consistent with federal law. “We’re confident the state will swiftly prevail in this case,” Gardon added.

Jonathan Keller, President of the California Family Council, [said](#) that by signing AB 1955 into law, Newsom committed “a direct assault on the safety of children and the rights of their parents,” adding,

By allowing schools to withhold vital information from mothers and fathers, this bill undermines their fundamental role and places boys and girls in potential jeopardy. Moms and dads have both a constitutional and divine mandate to guide and protect their kids, and AB 1955 egregiously violates this sacred trust.

One of the most high-profile critics of the AB 1955 is Elon Musk, who announced that he will be relocating SpaceX headquarters from Hawthorne, California, to Starbase, Texas, because of “this law and many others that preceded it, attacking both families and companies.”

California’s approach to LGBTQ agenda for children has been notoriously aggressive. The state has mandated all-gender restrooms in K-12 schools and established the Transgender Wellness and Equity Fund, which critics argue prioritizes ideological agendas over parental rights and children’s’ wellbeing. Additionally, California’s requirement for staff training to support LGBTQ students facing bullying and discrimination has raised concerns about government overreach and the erosion of parental involvement. Critics contend that these measures compromise transparency and parental oversight, reflecting broader tensions about the role of schools and state policies in family matters.

Bigger Picture

Nationwide, the debate over parental rights and LGBTQ student “protections” has intensified over the past couple of years. Numerous states have introduced legislation to restrict so-called gender-affirming



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care, exclude male “transgender” athletes from female sports, and require schools to inform parents about any changes in their child’s emotional health or well-being. For example, Alabama and Arkansas have enacted laws banning transgender procedures for minors, while states such as Tennessee and South Carolina require schools to notify parents about any changes in their child’s gender identity.

In 2022, Florida enacted the “Parental Rights in Education” bill, which restricts discussions of gender identity and sexual orientation in the early grades. In the same year, [Texas issued](#) a directive to investigate parents for child abuse if they allow their children to receive gender-affirming care.

At the same time, a few other states and localities have laws and policies similar to California’s AB 1955 can. For instance, [New Jersey](#) has regulations that allow schools to share gender identity information with parents only with the student’s permission or if there’s a risk to the student’s health and safety. Meanwhile, some school districts, such as that of [Loudoun County](#) in Virginia, have issued guidelines that allow students to keep their identities secret from their parents.



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