

LGBT Factsheet

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights...”

– Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 1

“I don't feel like adolescents should have to go to school in survival mode.”

– Leon C., Long Beach, CA, October 1999

There are more than two million lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender school-age kids living in the United States.

- Despite the above principle from the Universal Declaration, many people around the world face discrimination and violence every day based solely on who they are.
- In “Hatred in the Hallways”, Human Rights Watch spoke to students who face daily harassment from peers, making learning difficult and sometimes even impossible.
- Deeply entrenched societal biases contribute to teachers and administrators frequently turning their backs on these abuses, refusing to take reports of harassment or hold accountable those who commit these acts.
- Both kids who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender and those that are perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender face routine violence and discrimination.
- Governments routinely fail to protect laws that prohibit discrimination and to make sure that schools are safe for **all** kids.

What can I do?

- Start or help to start a Gay/Straight Alliance in your school.
- Organize a Youth Lobby Day to let your State Legislators know that this issue is important to you.
- Log on to the Human Rights Watch web site <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/uslgbt> to view sample letters that you can send to school board, state lawmakers, and representatives in Congress to urge them to adopt anti-discrimination policies and make your school safe for all kids.

For more information, please visit Human Rights Watch's website at <http://www.hrw.org>

“The child... shall be given an education..., on a basis of equal opportunity, to develop his... sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society.”

– Declaration on the Rights of the Child, Article 7