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Form to confirm that you intend to plan a walkout at your school:

<https://tinyurl.com/QueerSlay>

PLEASE ENSURE YOU ARE IN OUR DISCORD: <https://discord.gg/BE7H3KBr9U>



What's Going On?

On Friday, September 16th, the Virginia Department of Education published draft revisions to the model transgender policies. The original model transgender policies were intended to protect Queer students. They lay the foundation for key protections for every Queer student, including the right to not be outed by schools, use bathrooms that align with their gender identity, and be addressed by your true name and pronouns.

However, these new revisions:

- Allow people to maliciously deadname and misgender students.
- Prevent students from using their correct name, unless they get parental consent and get it legally changed.
- Let parents opt a student out of counseling, regardless of the student's will.
- Prevent school districts from collecting data on rates of depression in the LGBTQIA+ student body.
- Require schools to out any transgender and gender expansive student, and may allow schools to out all Queer students
- Require parents to control a student's name, pronouns, and gender expression, **regardless of the student's identity.**
- Prohibit schools from addressing students by their correct pronouns if they don't align with your assigned birth sex.
- Prohibit schools from recognizing non-binary pronouns.
- Ban transgender athletes.
- Ban transgender students from using bathrooms that align with their gender identities.

Source: [☰ Model Trans Policies: A Breakdown](#)

Every school district in Virginia is required to implement these new guidelines. The good news is that these guidelines are **only a draft, meaning we can stop them**. But to stop them, we need **as many students as we can in Virginia mobilizing and standing up for the rights of Queer students**.

OUR DEMANDS ARE SIMPLE:

1. To The DOE: Revoke these draft revisions and preserve the existing model transgender policies.
2. To Local School Boards: Reject these new model transgender policies and protect Queer students.



How are we stopping these draft guidelines from coming into effect?

We're expecting legal challenges to be launched in the next coming days. While we support these legal challenges, the reality is that they will likely take weeks, if not months, to resolve, and the judicial system cannot be relied on to safeguard our rights, given the attempts to politicize the judiciary system.

As such, **it is important that we get as many students as possible to pressure our leaders to reject these changes.** To do this, we are planning a massive day of action on **Tuesday, September 27th**, when students across Virginia will walk out of school to reject these changes. We will follow this up with an extensive media advocacy campaign and rallies at multiple school boards across Virginia. The ultimate goal is to make it clear that students oppose these bigoted changes.

Why do walkouts matter?

Walkouts are the best way for us to show that Virginia students don't support these changes. Because these walkouts will be coordinated across the state, occur at multiple schools, receive media coverage, and be followed up with actions at the school board, we believe they will help **make it clear to education leaders and the media that students reject these changes.**

It's also important to remember that these are only **draft guidelines**. As such, mass mobilization right now is especially powerful, because it tells our education leaders to not go forward with these changes.

While it is true that walkouts alone can't stop these regulations, they are still an **important part of a multi-faceted strategy to stop these terrible guidelines.**

Finally, we want to make sure everyone understands just how dire these regulations are. The original model transgender policies were the cornerstone of almost every Queer protection that existed for LGBTQIA+ students. They weren't enough, but they still were critical in minimizing some of the worst harm, like closeted students getting outed to their parents. **These proposed guidelines are essentially taking that cornerstone and using it to undermine our rights. If these guidelines are implemented, it will be the single biggest loss for Queer rights in Virginia in years.** It also will harm every other social justice movement. Not only do these guidelines disproportionately harm those who belong to marginalized communities, but they also take away student autonomy in a broader context and will embolden hate movements. **The time to mobilize is now.**



I'm down to put together a walk-out at my school. What do I need to do?

Before you even walk out...

1. The first step is filling out this Google Form. We may already be planning a walkout at your school, and we want to make sure we can connect you with those leaders. Google Form: <https://forms.gle/J6eEu9u6SWuysFNp9>
2. **The next step is finding other people who can help.** Get around 5 friends who you trust, and create a group chat with them. Make sure they understand what is going on. Also, designate a press person who can attend one of our press trainings!
3. Next, with those friends, designate a place where people can meet during the walkouts. It is essential that this location is **outside and near public sidewalks**. **It is best if this location is highly visible.** Press is prohibited from entering campus, but they can be on public sidewalks taking pictures. **You should also designate a time of protest, but please make sure it is on Tuesday, September 27th. See our FAQ for why!**
4. Next, get other students to help out. Create some Instagram graphics/flyers and post it. Also, ask other clubs to amplify it. It is so important that you get as many people you can to show up to this walkout. It's also **immensely helpful to create a headcount so we can estimate the number of people who are demonstrating. This helps us give accurate information to the press.** Please also make sure that people know pictures will be taken and that straight allies are needed to protect the identity of closeted students.
 - a. [Template](#): Flier for 8.5 X 11 paper. Please note this is only for recruitment and you should be distributing a different sheet at the actual walkout (more information on this later in the guide)
 - b. [Template](#): Instagram graphic (square). Sample Instagram caption:
 - i. "ATTENTION (insert HS) STUDENTS: Governor Youngkin and the VDOE are trying to erase the rights of every LGBTQIA+ student in Virginia through draft VDOE regulations. Join our walkout on Tuesday, September 27th at (time/location). Contact me if you are interested!"



- c. To use these:
 - i. Make a copy of them - open them, go to recents on your canva account, select 3 dots, and select make a copy
 - ii. Replace the second logo with your school's logo on both pages
 - iii. On the bottom of the first page, include the high school name, and include the time/location
 - iv. Add contact point (phone, email, IG, etc.) for both pages
 - v. Make sure to tag @PrideLiberation on any walkout post!
5. Next, it is time to get administrative approval. You might do this step concurrently with Step 4. Throughout the approval process, make sure you check out the FAQ for the language you can use. **Make sure you emphasize that you have a legal right to protest, that this will occur outside, and that each walkout will be safe.**
6. Then, host a meeting where people planning this event can make signs! You can be creative, but please make sure the signs fit into our messaging guides. Please also make sure you print out the flyers that we will distribute at the walkout (we can compensate for printing, but it is much easier if you can find a supportive staff member to print out these flyers). The flyers to distribute at the rally will be posted on this document later (and we'll email you).
7. Finally, make sure that you know what you are going to do: there might be speeches, chants, or you might just take a picture!
8. It also might be helpful to create a slideshow among the team of organizers at your school who are putting together the walkout! This is an excellent example, courtesy of McLean planning a walkout: [📄 Draft Outline Plan for MHS walkout](#) . Please note you **do not have to do this through a club**, but it definitely is a good idea to loop in allied clubs, like GSAs, Black Student Associations, and social justice groups in the cause.

During the walkout:

1. Follow your plan: do the chants, speeches, or pictures.
2. Take pictures! We need pictures so we can share this with press!
3. If there are press, make sure you are respectful and refer them to the designated press person.



4. **Distribute these flyers so we can educate people on what is going on. This is imperative so we can plug them into other actions. The fliers are available here: (will be posted later upon creation)**
5. Make sure you tell people about the school board rally that will be happening and how they can sign up! This information should also be on the flier!
6. Tag @PrideLiberation on any posts!

After the walkout:

1. Fill out the debriefing form: <https://forms.gle/7qKCDZBjHYssdkKw6>

We will have individuals who are designated as walkout leads in each school district. Contact these people directly at any time if you need help. You can also always send a message in any channel in the Discord and someone will respond.

School Board Rallies

We need to follow up our actions with school board action. Please make sure that you plug in these rallies happening at your walkout. **If you don't see your county listed below, and are interested in organizing a rally at your next school board meeting, please reach out to us through Discord or DM us on Instagram at @prideliberation.**

[You can sign up to attend a school board rally here](#)

Fairfax County: Luther Jackson Middle School, Thursday October 6 @ 6:15 PM

Loudoun County: Loudoun County Public School District, Tuesday September 27, 2022, Time TBD. We will also be rallying on October 11th, but there is still a rally on September 27th.

Prince William County: Edward L. Kelly Leadership Center, Tuesday October 4, 2022, Time TBD

Arlington County: Syphax Education Center, Thursday October 13, 2022

Henrico County: New Bridge Auditorium, Thursday October 13, 2022

Winchester County: Central Administrative Office, Monday October 10, 2022



FAQ:

Can I get in trouble for participating in this demonstration?

We can't guarantee that there will be no consequences for demonstrating. However, **the First Amendment guarantees that you cannot be punished for the content of your speech- only the disruption you cause.** This means that they cannot prohibit your walkout just because it is Queer-oriented, and that if they let a previous walkout happen, you likely can do it again. The Supreme Court decision that affirms that they cannot punish the message of your speech is *Tinker v. Des Moines*, which says:

- Students do not “shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate.”

Moreover, you have a right to protest provided that your message does not cause significant disruption to the school environment, but it is possible that a walkout arises to that level. This is affirmed in *Tinker v. Des Moines*:

- “A prohibition against expression of opinion, without any evidence that the rule is necessary to avoid substantial interference with school discipline or the rights of others, is not permissible under the First and Fourteenth Amendments.”

As such, a walkout after-school may be less likely to arise to the level of significant disruption, though it is preferable to do it during school hours.

[Title 22.1 of the Virginia code](#) also says “subject to guidelines established by the Department, each school board (i) shall permit one school day-long excused absence per school year for any middle school or high school student in the local school division who is absent from school to engage in a civic event and (ii) may permit additional excused absences for such students who are absent for such purpose.” The resources for each county are available here **(we will fix these links shortly)**:

- Fairfax County:
- Loudoun County:
- Prince William County:

It can also be helpful to cite examples of civil disobedience and organizing when talking to administrators. This includes, but isn't limited to:

- Henry Thoreau: “Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice” and “It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right.
- Martin Luther King Jr.: “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”



- Ben Franklin: “Those that can give up essential liberty to gain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.”
- Margaret Mead: “A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Finally, it can also be helpful to explain that this is a **time-sensitive issue that we need to act on now, these proposed guidelines will hurt countless students, and multiple students feel strongly that they want to take action on this issue to** administrators.

What happens if we get in trouble or if the administration denies my request?

If you get in trouble or the administration denies your request, please let us know immediately. We will be contacting lawyers who can assist you.

This also will not adversely impact your chances of getting into most universities. Most universities have policies that protect peaceful protest. Here’s some examples:

- Harvard: [Harvard says it will not penalize applicants disciplined for participating in protests - The Boston Globe](#)
- Yale: [In Support of Student Protests | Yale College Undergraduate Admissions](#)
- MIT: [Policies, Principles, and Protests | MIT Admissions](#)
- Other Universities’ Policies: [Colleges Are Promising High Schoolers That Getting Suspended For Protesting Guns Won’t Hurt Their Admissions Chances](#)

We can also say anecdotally, we know many students who have protested who wrote about these protests in college essays and received admissions offers. Universities generally value students who are willing to stand up for their values, and as such, generally don’t penalize peaceful demonstrations. You also probably don’t want to attend a school that penalized peaceful demonstrations- remember that the college search process is as much about you choosing a school as it is a school admitting you.

Why does this matter and will this have an impact?

Walkouts are the crux of our campaign to oppose these regulations. If we walkout before these guidelines are cemented, we can tell the DOE that students aren’t behind these changes.

It also isn’t an exaggeration to say these policies can significantly harm the LGBTQIA+ community and even put our community at physical harm. We know Queer students are disproportionately impacted by housing insecurity, depression, harassment, and suicide,



and these proposed guidelines take away regulations that safeguarded against these crises.

Why should we trust you? What makes your project qualified to plan these?

We know that some of you may not be familiar with our project, and this question is completely valid. We've been engaged in student-led advocacy for close to 20 months now, and in that time, we've testified to school boards and the General Assembly. We also have been featured in well over 100 news articles, including two Washington Post op-eds. Moreover, we've directly advocated on this issue before, have successfully introduced legislation in the 2023 General Assembly, and collaborated with a range of other community organizations, including Equality VA, the ACLU VA, the Fairfax NAACP, FCPS Pride, and Safe Space NOVA.

Most importantly, the people creating this guide are students who are either current Queer students in Virginia or recent graduates who were directly impacted by these regulations. We aren't a far-away advocacy organization- we're part of the community and are impacted by any movement on this issue.

I've never demonstrated before. Is it hard?

It can be intimidating, but truly, we think this policy demands a strong response of students. We also promise that we will be there with you every step of the way to make sure you can successfully pull this off.

What will the press look like?

Multiple forms of media (press, print, blogs, etc.) may be present, but they're all respectful, have reported on students in the past, and will only talk to designated press people. **Please do not reach out to press by yourself- the Pride Liberation Project has extensive press connections and will handle media outreach.**

When should we walkout? Why on September 27th?

We need to make sure walkouts happen on the same day to maximize our voices and press coverage. It is much more powerful when multiple schools walk-out, rather than one school.

The time you walk out on September 27th doesn't matter- it just matters that we choose September 27th. It also doesn't matter how long your walkout is- choose a length that best works for your school! We just need to make sure there's enough time for pictures, to plug in the school board rally, and educate people on the process!



Towards why we chose September 27th- we believe that this time is appropriate because it gives us enough time to plan, occurs before the DOE votes on these policies, encourages people to submit public comments, and makes it clear that students aren't for these changes.

When should we announce our school walkout?

ASAP! It's probably best to get administrative approval first though.

How should I recruit people for our school walkout?

Towards the support the PLP can provide, we will:

- Send out mass emails to everyone in your school who is in our network about your walkout.
- Amplify graphics as needed.
- Provide sample graphics (see [Before you even walk out...](#))

We also recommended that you:

- Reach out to social-justice oriented organizations, including Young Democrats, GSA/QSA/PRISM clubs, Period Justice Clubs, Racial Justice Clubs, and Human Right Clubs.
- Discuss this event with others in your school.
- Recruit others at your school to promote your walkout.

Should Teachers Be Involved?

As a student, your main priority should be to get other students to join in with your walkout. Please do not focus on getting teachers to walkout.

IMPORTANT: We also cannot guarantee the job security for any teacher who walks out. The information in this guide is solely applicable to students. Teachers are bound by vastly different standards than students, particularly during the school day.

What is a sample email I can send to an administrator?

"Good morning (whoever you're emailing),

My name is (insert your name), I'm a (insert your grade) at (insert your school). Recently, the Virginia Department of Education released new guidelines that hurt transgender and Queer students. Dozens of students feel strongly against these guidelines, and plan to walkout on Sep 27 to protest these policies. We will be walking out at (insert location) and (this time).



Would you be willing to schedule a meeting to discuss how we can walkout while minimizing disruption in the next week or so?

Best,
Name "