



February 21, 2016
The Honorable Dennis Daugaard
Office of the Governor
500 E Capitol Ave
Pierre, SD 57501

On behalf of the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine, I urge you to veto HB 1008. The Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine (SAHM) is a multidisciplinary organization committed to improving the physical and psychosocial health and well-being of all adolescents through advocacy, clinical care, health promotion, health service delivery, professional development and research. Our organization consists of adolescent health and medical experts who have years of professional experience working with Trans and Gender Nonconforming (TGNC) youth. We believe that all students deserve a safe school environment in which to learn. HB 1008 sends a message that it is "ok" for TGNC students to be treated differently which can ultimately lead to stigmatization and harm (both physically and mentally) for these students. Research data indicate that when any sexual minority student experiences this type of stigmatization, the result can be depression, substance abuse, school failure and even suicide.

There is no scientific proof that forcing Trans and Gender Nonconforming Youth to use separate bathrooms and locker rooms leads to any benefit for either these students or their peers. School policies need to be based on evidence and research - not on misinformation and biased opinions. TGNC youth thrive and succeed when they are supported both by their schools as well as by their families. HB 1008 subverts the potential for these students to feel safe, valued, and to succeed.

If HB 1008 were to become law, it would force schools to adopt harmful and isolating policies that contradict the recommendations of the medical and mental health professions. We believe that passage of this bill would single out these vulnerable students and place them at significant risk for the aforementioned tragic short and long-term outcomes.

Based on the results of scientific data, as well as our breadth of knowledge about TGNC youth, the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine urges you to veto HB 1008 and to stand alongside the rights of all students who want an education free of discrimination, bullying, and stigmatization.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael D. Resnick". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Michael D. Resnick, PhD, FSAHM
President, Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine
Professor of Pediatrics, Public Health, and Nursing
University of Minnesota

One Parkview Plaza, Suite 800 | Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181 USA
Phone: +1-847-686-2246 | Fax: +1-847-686-2251 | www.adolescenthealth.org