



U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin

The Tyler Clementi Act - No one should live in fear of being who they are

By Senator Tammy Baldwin

I recently joined Senator Patty Murray from Washington to reintroduce the *Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act of 2014*, a bill aimed at curbing harassment and bullying at colleges at universities across America.

No student or employee should have to live in fear of being who they are. Our schools should not be, and cannot be a place of discrimination, harassment, bullying, intimidation or violence.

This legislation is an important step forward in not only preventing and addressing harassment on campus, but also making sure our students have the freedom to succeed in safe and healthy communities of learning and achievement.

The Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act of 2014:

- Requires colleges and universities receiving federal aid to establish an anti-harassment policy prohibiting the harassment of enrolled students based on their actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religion.
- Requires colleges to distribute their anti-harassment policy to all students and employees, including prospective students and employees, upon request.
- Recognizes “cyberbullying,” which includes harassment undertaken through electronic messaging services, commercial mobile services, and other electronic communications.
- Authorizes a competitive grant program for institutions of higher education to initiate, expand, or improve programs to: (a) prevent the harassment of students; (b) provide counseling or redress services to students who have been harassed or accused of subjecting other students to harassment; and (c) train students, faculty, or staff to prevent harassment or address harassment if it occurs.

According to a 2004 study by Rowan University, 27.5 percent of college students indicated they had seen students being bullied by other students. LGBT students are nearly twice as likely as their peers to experience harassment, and are far more likely to indicate the harassment was based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. However, there is no requirement that colleges and universities have policies to protect their students and employees from harassment.

Nor is there Federal aid dedicated to enact programs to prevent and reduce harassment against students.

The legislation was first introduced by the late Senator Frank Lautenberg after Tyler Clementi, a freshman at Rutgers University, took his own life after his roommate and another student invaded his privacy and harassed him over the Internet.

Everyone deserves a fair shot at our colleges and universities across America. I'm proud to support this legislation to help ensure people can pursue their dreams free of harassment and bullying.