



National “Don’t Say Gay” Bill

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A recent piece of legislation was introduced in Congress that would limit federal money allowed to groups, local governments, and educational institutions that feature LGBTQIA+ content in their events, programs, education, and other activities. If approved by Congress, the proposal would forbid federal, state, local, and nonprofit organizations that receive federal funding from creating, facilitating, or supporting activities for young people under the age of 10 that deal with "sexual orientation, gender identity, gender dysphoria, or related subjects." Any public or private organization that uses federal funds to show or facilitate anything featuring LGBTQIA+ identities would be subject to legal action from parents. Obviously, this is horrible. Many students go to school and sadly, feel safer to be themselves there than at home. This is true for many students who are different from what they were raised to be, not just LGBTQIA+ students.

The measure stipulates that if an agency or organization breaks these rules more than once in a five-year period, it might be denied access to federal funds for three years. The bill particularly refers to drag performances, which have recently come under fire from conservative organizations pushing for legislation similar to this one. Everyone needs to vote, plain and simple. Use your government given voice and protect students around you by voting for people who want them to shine their brightest and most authentic selves.

As a queer student at VCU, who recently attended a drag show that VCU put on, it’s easy to say wow, this is so ridiculous. It’s important to remember that the people who honestly believe what they are saying when they talk about the harm of drag shows are raising children of their own. We cannot simply scoff at those who disagree with us, but can try to have productive conversations instead. When trying to change a large group's minds it is easy to get frustrated. We will not change everyone’s, but we can change someone’s. And that person we get through to by using our words, along with compassion and understanding, will be kinder to those who are different than them. They will teach that behavior to some of their own friends and family, and before you know it this cycle of positivity and inclusivity grows.