

AFT RESOLUTION:
DEFEAT ANTI-LGBT “DON’T SAY GAY” AND ANTI-TRANSGENDER
BILLS and ATTACKS WITH MASS PRIDE AND MASS ACTION

WHEREAS, thousands of young middle school, high school, and college students walked out in Florida and across the country throughout the spring in response to the latest right-wing attack of the Trump movement trying to force LGBT youth back into the closet. In the walkouts, some under the banner “Say Gay Anyway!” youth proclaimed loud and clear that they refuse to go back into the closet, they will be no acceptance of anti-LGBT violence in our schools, our communities, and in this country. These attacks have emboldened young people to be more openly gay, transgender, and proud than ever before.

WHEREAS, HB 1557, presented as “An act relating to parental rights in education”, better known as the “Don’t Say Gay” bill, is a vile and bigotted attack on LGBT youth in Florida, presented as prohibiting any discussion on sexual orientation and gender identity in school classrooms.

WHEREAS, the Florida law could eliminate any book or educational material that even mentions anything about LGBT rights or references any LGBT historical figures, or those who are in “non-traditional” gender roles or identity. Although the law claims to apply to the kindergarten to 3rd grade levels, what this law could mean is that discussions on gay and transgender could be silenced and prohibited at any grade level .

WHEREAS, the bill does more than prohibit classroom discussions about sexual orientation and gender identity, it’s a green light to anti-LGBT bigots, Trump supporters, and neo-fascists to repress LGBT students and all youth rights.

WHEREAS, one of the most dangerous and vicious provisions of this bill also aims to compell teachers, counselors, and any school staff to inform abusive, homophobic or transphobic parents if their child is discussing their sexual orientation or gender identity in school. This would make it impossible for LGBT students to go to any adult in the education system to raise their sexuality or gender identity, isolating them and setting them up for potential abuse at home.

WHEREAS, already in 2022, hundreds of homophobic and anti-transgender bills have been introduced in state legislatures across the country, and some have already passed. Many have specifically targeted youth and educators in schools. The passage of Florida's "Dont Say Gay" law has already emboldened these efforts across the country.

WHEREAS, These laws and the anti-LGBT, anti-youth propoganda that is used to justify them is intended to whip-up attacks in our schools and communities. We must build campaigns to defend LGBT youth and support their fight for equality.

WHEREAS, for most young people, schools are a place to build social relations that help youth develop their own sense of identity as an independent person, including their sexual orientation and gender identity. It is essential to learning and development for young people to have a safe school environment that validates, acknowledges, and celebrates LGBT people and history, whether the students are out or not. These bills guarantees the negative reinforcement of every homophobic, anti-transgender, backward, and bigoted impulse in our society.

WHEREAS, the leadership of LGBT youth and allies has been critical to defending all civil rights and human rights against attacks, including by the proto-fascist Trump movement over the next years. We must defend our leaders.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) will take all necessary steps to defeat and overturn the "Don't Say Gay" law in Florida and other homophobi and anti-transgender laws and attacks throughout the country.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the AFT affirms our commitment to LGBT youth and all young people to learn about and develop their own sexual orientation and gender identity. We support the independent mass actions of youth to defend their existence, dignity, and rights of the LGBT community.

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED, the AFT will vigorously defend educators who support LGBT youth and who teach about the existence, dignity, rights, mass actions, history, and pride of LGBT people.

