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For Immediate Release

Contact:

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Harassment & Bullying in Schools - San Antonio Community Forum on Safe Schools

Austin, Texas (October 9, 2009) – Every student in Texas schools deserves an education free from the harmful physical and emotional effects of harassment and bullying. However, every day thousands of Texas children dread going to school to face the taunts, jeers, humiliation, physical intimidation and pain inflicted through harassment and bullying.

The Equality Texas Foundation is concerned that many school districts' current policies on bullying and harassment may be inadequate, or inadequately enforced. Although Texas' schools have worked to make safe schools a reality by putting in place bullying and harassment policies required by the Texas Education Code, we believe current statutes do not yet adequately address the prevention, intervention, and elimination of bullying and harassment from our schools.

Although well-defined and communicated policies help deal with bullying and harassment when it happens, a comprehensive program is necessary for prevention. Programs that integrate a data-tracking system for bullying and harassment incidents, a robust district-level policy that is consistently enforced, and a research-proven program to educate both students and staff about bullying and harassment have been found to be the most effective.

On Wednesday, October 21, 2009, the Equality Texas Foundation will host the third of several statewide open community forums on safe schools.

Safe Schools Forum

Wednesday, October 21, 2009 at 6:00 p.m.
UTSA Downtown Campus
Durango Building, Southwest Room

San Antonio, TX 78249

Panelists:

Deborah Healy – Director of Guidance & Counseling, Northside ISD
Megan Flowers – Coordinator, *No Place for Hate* program of the Anti-Defamation League
Marry Libby – Former President, Texas Counseling Association
Ginger Yachinich - Senior, Wagner High School, Judson ISD
Rick Gipprich - Director of Prevention Education & Training, The Rape Crisis Center of San Antonio

Moderator:

Chuck Smith – Deputy Director, Equality Texas Foundation

Parents and students are encouraged to join us for this important open discussion on school safety.

This forum is presented by Equality Texas Foundation, in collaboration with the Anti-Defamation League, the Texas Civil Rights Project, and the Texas GSA Network – a project of Out Youth.

Additional Community Forums on Safe Schools are scheduled for El Paso and Dallas/Fort Worth.



Equality Texas Foundation educates and engages the public about policies and their effect on Texans of all sexual orientations and gender identities/expressions.

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