

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 2, 2017

Secretary Betsy DeVos
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Madame Secretary:

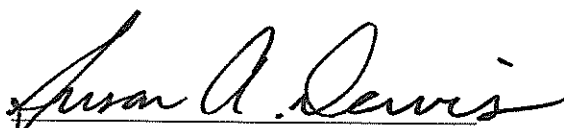
We are writing to express our profound concern about the recent reversal of critical guidance for protecting transgender students. The elimination of the guidance clarifying the scope of Title IX protections will send a dangerous message to transgender students. We were heartened to read your statement which recognized our responsibility to ensure that every student in America has, “the freedom to learn and thrive in a safe and trusted environment.” However, we are confused by the sharp contrast between this statement and the comments you made at the Conservative Political Action Conference where you called these key safeguards examples of federal overreach.

As members of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, we know that students learn best when they feel supported and protected at school. We also know that too many transgender students are bullied in schools across our country every day. According to a study conducted by the National Center of Transgender Equality, 54% of transgender students surveyed reported being verbally harassed and 24% reported being physically attacked. In fact, the study found that 17% of transgender students were so badly mistreated that they left their schools altogether. Given the alarming impact of these statistics on the quality of life and education for transgender students, we ask that you clarify your views on the scope of the Department of Education’s responsibility to protect these students. Additionally, we ask that you share what you believe the Department of Education’s Title IX responsibilities are in the case of LGBTQIA students.

If the Department of Justice remains resistant to generally protecting LGBTQIA students, we ask that you take concrete steps to at least ensure the safety of these students under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education. We recommend that you convene groups of state and district leaders to discuss best practices for supporting transgender students, provide resources for school employees that detail how they can create an inclusive environment, and highlight examples of schools that implement these best practices effectively.

We are counting on your leadership on this important issue and hope you will protect students across our country. We remain committed to helping you in these vital efforts, and thank you for your prompt attention to this issue.

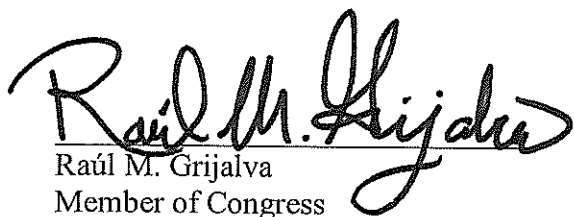
Sincerely,



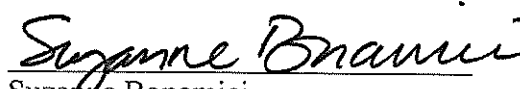
Susan A. Davis
Member of Congress



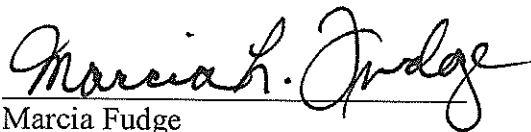
Bobby Scott
Member of Congress



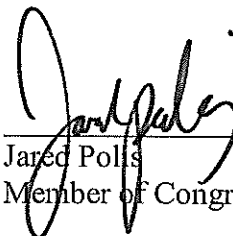
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Marcia Fudge
Member of Congress



Jared Polis
Member of Congress



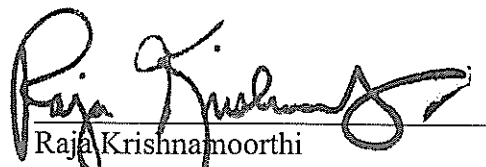
Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Alma Adams
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress