Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act of 2014

Proposed Motions: Support the Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act of 2014
Sponsor: Kaylee Galloway, AS VP for Governmental Affairs

Date: April 3, 2014

Attached Document

Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act of 2014 Senate Bill
U.S. Senate One Pager on Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act of 2014

Summary of Proposal

Even though this topic was not selected as one of the three federal priorities selected and approved by the LAC and Board of Directors, it is still very important and relevant to students. The AS President (Carly Roberts), AS VP for Governmental Affairs (Kaylee Galloway), and AS Legislative Liaison (Matthew Bobbink), will be leaving April 5th for the AS Federal Lobby Trip in Washington DC.

Recently, it was brought to our attention that Senator Patty Murray is one of the key sponsors in the Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act of 2014 and that we should be prepared to take a stance on this issue during our lobby visits. Even though this student issue will not be listed in our physical federal agenda, it is important that we take a stance to best prepare and represent students at the federal level.

Background & Context

The Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act has historically been included on ASWWU Federal Agendas.

2013:

H.R. 482, S. 216 The Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act
Bullying and harassment based on sexual orientation is an occurrence which happens far too often on college campuses, and we believe that Congress must ensure that all college students have access to a safe learning environment.

2012:

Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Bill
WHEREAS, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students report higher rates of harassment than their peers; and

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WHEREAS, according to the WWU 2012 Student Climate Survey, LGBT students on Western’s campus are more likely to report discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity than at peer institutions, and are 132% more likely to report being harassed in the last twelve months on campus than non-minority students; and

WHEREAS, bullying and harassment can lead to long-term psychological, academic, social, and physical consequences including increased absences, depression, feelings of isolation, and difficulty focusing; and

WHEREAS, this bill would require all institutions of higher education receiving federal funds to put in place a policy prohibiting the harassment of students based on perceived or actual race, color, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, sex, or gender identity; and

WHEREAS, this bill would require that colleges and universities make students explicitly aware of this policy as well as give them guidelines on how to utilize this policy; and

WHEREAS, this bill would recognize cyber bullying as harassment, thereby acknowledging that bullying exists beyond campus and face-to-face interactions; and

WHEREAS, no student should be denied the right to enjoy a campus free of hate or discrimination because of whom they love or how they identify; and

WHEREAS, it is one of the paramount duties of the Associated Students is to foster and support an inclusive climate on our campus for every student at Western; and

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Associated Students supports the Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Bill as a means to ensure that all college students have access to a safe learning environment.

Rationale

It is important to take stances on current and relevant student issues to ensure proper and adequate student representation at all levels of government.
To prevent harassment at institutions of higher education, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mrs. Murray (for herself and Ms. Baldwin) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To prevent harassment at institutions of higher education, and for other purposes.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

4 This Act may be cited as the “Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act of 2014”.

6 SEC. 2. INSTITUTIONAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS.

8 Section 485(f) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092(f)) is amended—
(1) by striking the subsection heading and inserting "DISCLOSURE OF CAMPUS SECURITY AND HARASSMENT POLICY AND CAMPUS CRIME STATISTICS."

(2) in paragraph (6)(A)—

(A) by redesignating clauses (iii), (iv), and (v), as clauses (vii), (viii), and (ix), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after clause (ii) the following:

"(iii) The term 'commercial mobile service' has the meaning given the term in section 332(d) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 332(d))."

"(iv) The term 'electronic communication' means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, or data of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic, or photoptical system."

"(v) The term 'electronic messaging services' has the meaning given the term in section 102 of the Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act (47 U.S.C. 1001)."

"(vi) The term 'harassment' means conduct, including acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility (including conduct
that is undertaken in whole or in part, through the use of electronic messaging services, commercial mobile services, electronic communications, or other technology) that—

“(I) is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive so as to limit a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from a program or activity at an institution of higher education, or to create a hostile or abusive educational environment at an institution of higher education; and

“(II) is based on a student’s actual or perceived—

“(aa) race;

“(bb) color;

“(cc) national origin;

“(dd) sex;

“(ee) disability;

“(ff) sexual orientation;

“(gg) gender identity; or

“(hh) religion.”;

(3) by redesignating paragraphs (9) through (18) as paragraphs (10) through (19), respectively; and
(4) by inserting after paragraph (8) the following:

"(9)(A) Each institution of higher education participating in any program under this title, other than a foreign institution of higher education, shall develop and distribute as part of the report described in paragraph (1) a statement of policy regarding harassment, which shall include—

"(i) a prohibition of harassment of enrolled students by other students, faculty, and staff—

"(I) on campus;

"(II) in noncampus buildings or on noncampus property;

"(III) on public property;

"(IV) through the use of electronic mail addresses issued by the institution of higher education;

"(V) through the use of computers and communication networks, including any telecommunications service, owned, operated, or contracted for use by the institution of higher education or its agents; or

"(VI) during an activity sponsored by the institution of higher education or carried out
with the use of resources provided by the institution of higher education;

“(ii) a description of the institution’s programs to combat harassment, which shall be aimed at the prevention of harassment;

“(iii) a description of the procedures that a student should follow if an incident of harassment occurs; and

“(iv) a description of the procedures that the institution will follow once an incident of harassment has been reported.

“(B) The statement of policy described in subparagraph (A) shall address the following areas:

“(i) Procedures for timely institutional action in cases of alleged harassment, which procedures shall include a clear statement that the accuser and the accused shall be informed of the outcome of any disciplinary proceedings in response to an allegation of harassment.

“(ii) Possible sanctions to be imposed following the final determination of an institutional disciplinary procedure regarding harassment.

“(iii) Notification of existing counseling, mental health, or student services for victims or perpetra-
tors of harassment, both on campus and in the community.

“(iv) Identification of a designated employee or office at the institution that will be responsible for receiving and tracking each report of harassment by a student, faculty, or staff member.”.

SEC. 3. ANTI-HARASSMENT COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible entity” means—

(A) an institution of higher education, including an institution of higher education in a collaborative partnership with a nonprofit organization; or

(B) a consortium of institutions of higher education located in the same State.

(2) HARASSMENT.—The term “harassment” has the meaning given the term in section 485(f)(6)(A) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)), as amended by section 2 of this Act.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Education.
(b) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary is authorized to award grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible entities to enable eligible entities to carry out the authorized activities described in subsection (d).

(c) AMOUNT OF GRANT AWARDS.—The Secretary shall ensure that each grant awarded under this section is of sufficient amount to enable the grantee to meet the purpose of this section.

(d) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—An eligible entity that receives a grant under this section shall use the funds made available through the grant to address one or more of the types of harassment listed in section 485(f)(6)(A)(vi)(II) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(vi)(II)), as amended by section 2 of this Act, by initiating, expanding, or improving programs—

(1) to prevent the harassment of students at institutions of higher education;

(2) at institutions of higher education that provide counseling or redress services to students who have suffered such harassment or students who have been accused of subjecting other students to such harassment; or

(3) that educate or train students, faculty, or staff of institutions of higher education about ways
to prevent harassment or ways to address such harassment if it occurs.

(c) APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this section, an eligible entity shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information, as the Secretary may require.

(f) DURATION; RENEWAL.—A grant under this section shall be awarded for a period of not more than 3 years. The Secretary may renew a grant under this section for one additional period of not more than 2 years.

(g) AWARD CONSIDERATIONS.—In awarding a grant under this section, the Secretary shall select eligible entities that demonstrate the greatest need for a grant and the greatest potential benefit from receipt of a grant.

(h) REPORT AND EVALUATION.—

(1) EVALUATION AND REPORT TO THE SECRETARY.—Not later than 6 months after the end of the eligible entity's grant period, the eligible entity shall—

(A) evaluate the effectiveness of the activities carried out with the use of funds awarded pursuant to this section in decreasing harassment and improving tolerance; and
(B) prepare and submit to the Secretary a report on the results of the evaluation conducted by the entity.

(2) Evaluation and report to Congress.—Not later than 12 months after the date of receipt of the first report submitted pursuant to paragraph (1) and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall provide to Congress a report that includes the following:

(A) The number and types of eligible entities receiving assistance under this section.

(B) The anti-harassment programs being implemented with assistance under this section and the costs of such programs.

(C) Any other information determined by the Secretary to be useful in evaluating the overall effectiveness of the program established under this section in decreasing incidents of harassment at institutions of higher education.

(3) Best practices report.—The Secretary shall use the information provided under paragraph (1) to publish a report of best practices for combating harassment at institutions of higher education. The report shall be made available to all institutions of higher education and other interested parties.
1 (i) Authorization of Appropriations.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2020.

4 Sec. 4. Effect on Other Laws.

TYLER CLEMENTI HIGHER EDUCATION ANTI-HARASSMENT ACT OF 2014

Sponsored by Sen. Patty Murray and Sen. Tammy Baldwin

In 2010, 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. He was eighteen-years-old.

Tyler is one of thousands of college students who are harassed on campus and over the Internet each year. 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 Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act of 2014 requires colleges and universities to prohibit harassment and establishes within the Department of Education a grant program to support campus anti-harassment programs.

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

The Act:

- 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.

This legislation was most recently introduced by the late Sen. Lautenberg in 2013 (S.216). The language of Sen. Murray’s and Sen. Baldwin’s Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act of 2014 is updated language of the bill introduced by Sen. Lautenberg.