



March 10, 2026

Honorable Chair Ruth Ward
Senate Education Committee
Map Room, NH State Library
20 Park Street, Concord, NH

RE: NAMI NH Opposition to HB 1792

Chair Ward and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding HB 1792. My name is Holly Stevens, and I am the Director of Public Policy at NAMI New Hampshire, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. NAMI NH is a non-profit, grassroots organization whose mission is to improve the lives of all people impacted by mental illness and suicide through support, education and advocacy. On behalf of NAMI NH, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, I write in opposition of HB 1792, prohibiting school districts and personnel from the instruction of critical race theory and LGBTQ+ ideologies in schools as well as establishing a private right of action for violations.

It's no secret that both New Hampshire and the country at large are experiencing a youth mental health crisis. Youth in our state are reporting greater instances of anxiety, depression, and thoughts of self-harm. Suicide is the first leading cause of death for Granite Staters ages 10-14 and the second leading cause of death for youth and young adults ages 15-24. With this crisis in mind, we are gravely concerned about the impacts of stigma and discrimination on mental health. Research consistently demonstrates that experiences with stigma and discrimination have a negative effect on mental health and help-seeking and increases the risk of suicide in affected communities. The impacts of stigma and discrimination are pervasive, jeopardizing mental health and wellness not just for the individual, but throughout an entire community.

For LGBTQ+ youth in particular, a 2024 study found that 39% of LGBTQ+ young people seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year.¹ However, it is important to reiterate that such outcomes result in part from experiences with stigma and discrimination and being unable to receive necessary care and support. The aforementioned study also found that LGBTQ+ young people who reported living in very accepting communities attempted suicide at less than half the rate of those who reported living in very unaccepting communities.¹

HB 1792 would directly contribute to harmful stigma and discrimination that may lead to grave outcomes for many young Granite Staters. Though the bill primarily addresses gender and

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sexuality, it broadly implicates other aspects of a person's identity, which may include disability status. Schools are important protective environments for all youth; however, for young people who live with a disability or experience discrimination, the school community is essential to support their health, wellness, and opportunity.

Additionally, this bill would have a chilling effect on educators and the supportive role they may play in a young person's life. Oftentimes youth will approach trusted adults in their community, including educators, with questions or challenges and to discuss their developing identities. It is crucial that educators are open to having conversations with students, including discussions concerning identity-based characteristics. These conversations are a crucial stepping-stone to building a child's confidence, and without them, many young people may go on struggling in silence. Together, the policies in this bill would have a significant negative impact on the entire school community, which is a crucial protective and supportive environment for all youth.

NAMI NH urges the committee to recommend inexpedient to legislate for HB 1792 and instead prioritize policies that support youth mental health within schools and throughout the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Holly A. Stevens", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Holly A. Stevens, Esq.