**“Side by Side”**

**Talking Points for The Fair Education Act (SB 48) Senator Mark Leno**

By Angela F. Luna, M.Ed., NBCT

[aluna@sanjuan.edu](mailto:aluna@sanjuan.edu)

*(Free and for educational purposes only)*

**Rationale:**

Homophobia can manifest over a spectrum. It may take the form of blatant verbal, physical or psychological abuse, but it may also manifest in people who claim support, yet certain behavior indicate varying levels of inherent discriminatory beliefs. For example, an “ally” might say something like, “You don’t want it to appear that you’re *pushing* homosexuality” or “Let’s *wait* before we begin teaching LGBTQ lessons” or “I believe in equality, but I *still* want my son to participate in the Boys Scouts of America, even though I know they discriminate against LGBTQ.” These examples demonstrate the insidious and characteristically accepted attitudes toward LGBTQ people that sustain the very discrimination that must be eradicated.

Be prepared for various people to challenge the implementation of The Fair Education Act (SB 48) within publicly funded classrooms. Below are sampling arguments used by organizations to stymie the implementation of The Fair Education Act (SB 48) in order to continue the exclusion and discrimination of LGBTQ people. Each excuse is followed by a rebuttal.

*1. SB 48 is too expensive. Our state can’t afford it.*

**Response:** Teachers don’t need textbooks to implement an accurate and inclusive curriculum. Teachers are free to write their own lessons, conduct research projects using Internet resources, which are already available and accessible in most schools and/or gather resources from the school/public library to launch discussions and inquiries. Organizations such as GLESEN, GSA Network, The Anti-Defamation League and the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) have inclusive lesson plans ready and available for downloading for free or at a minimal cost.

*2. SB 48 “forces radical agendas on children.”*

**Response:** The Fair Education Act (SB 48) requires that teachers include LGBTQ people (and other groups) in lessons that draw attention to the myriad *contributions and positive impacts* to our society that have been made for thousands of years and continue in contemporary society by LGBTQ people. “Radical agenda” is never defined by those attempting to sustain homophobia and exclude LGBTQ

people because it does not exist. The words “radical agenda” is a buzz phrase used to instill fear in order to sustain homophobic attitudes.

*3. SB 48 infringes or usurps the rights of parents.*

**Response:** The Fair Education Act (SB 48) requires the inclusion of LGBTQ people in lessons that highlight the positive impacts they’ve made to our society. However, parents and guardians are free to have their child opt out of a lesson or request an alternative lesson, if they choose.

*4. SB 48 requires the introduction of LGBTQ lifestyles via public school instruction.*

**Response:** “Lifestyles” is another buzzword used with negative connotation by those working to sustain homophobic attitudes. Its intent is to conjure fear and continue the exclusion and prejudice toward LGBTQ people while it minimizes and trivializes LGBTQ lives and families. The Fair Education Act (SB 48) requires that LGBTQ people be included in public school curriculum with the objective of highlighting the positive societal impacts they have made throughout history. The law was written to preclude negative propaganda from publication in public school materials and the inclusion of LGBTQ people in social science curriculum.

*5. SB 48 forces teachers to address topics in class with children that should not be covered.*

**Response:** The Fair Education Act (SB 48) mandates that teachers include the contributions that LGBTQ people (and other groups) have made to society and the history of LGBTQ people. Sex, sexual activity, or anything related to sex is not part of The Fair Education Act (SB 48). The insistence that the law is about sexual activity is an intentional distraction used to instill fear among parents/guardians. Rather, the Fair Ed Act (SB 48) is a law that requires teachers to include LGBTQ people in school curriculum so students can learn about the contributions they’ve made to our society.

A. Luna, 2012