



## When Institutions Fail, We Rise!

### Activism Checklist

Feeling helpless at the moment? Here's a list of proactive actions you can take *right now* that can make a huge difference to our members and our students.



#### “I’m Here” Badge Campaigns

- What is it?: “I’m Here” badges, which can be worn with your regular school ID Badge, indicate to people that you are a safe person to talk to, no matter where you are in the building. They fight the erasure of identity and fear that especially students are feeling right now. Badges can be ordered here: <https://neaglbtcampus.wufoo.com/forms/im-here-safe-space-badge-order> (they are \$2 each), in addition to the QR code on the back of every badge in case you already have some. CEA also has a limited number of badges we can provide to you to get you started. Making a concerted effort to get all members to wear them makes a big difference in the lives of the students we serve, especially now when they are feeling most vulnerable. For bonus activism, individual locals could purchase them and sell them to teachers, with all the money going to your local Gender Sexuality Alliance (GSA).



## Rainbow Library Program

- What is it?: Any full-time school staff member at an elementary, middle, or high school in Connecticut is eligible to [apply](#) for a **FREE** set of LGBTQ+ themed books. That means school librarians, teachers, counselors, social workers, interventionists, and more are welcome to request a Rainbow Library. You can get one free set per school, no district. Books can be requested for any grade level and are tailored to be age appropriate. [www.Rainbowlibrary.org](http://www.Rainbowlibrary.org) Once again, visibility fights erasure and fear.



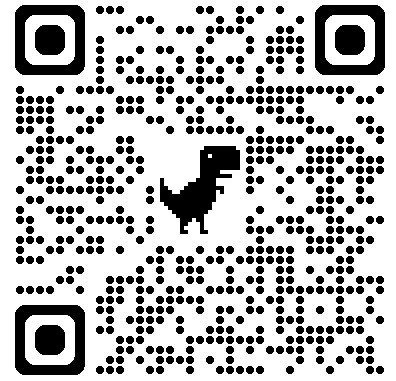
## Sponsor a GSA in Your School

- What is it?: A GSA (sometimes known as a Gay Straight Alliance or Gender Sexuality Alliance or Rainbow Clubs at the Elementary level) is an extra-curricular club designed to be a support group of inclusion. They are protected by the Equal Access Act of 1984, and schools must allow them to occur so long as they follow all the normal school rules for club formation (even at the elementary level). Even the existence of a GSA is a powerful signal that all students are welcome in a school. GSAs should be student-initiated, but will often need a faculty sponsor. The QR code goes to instructions of how to get one started.

## Stonington Board of Education passes resolution to allow Pride flags back in the classrooms

Breandan Cullen, a recent graduate of Stonington High School, said he struggled initially with homophobia and bigotry when he was a freshman...

Oct 26, 2022



### Pass BOE Model Resolutions

- What is it?: Insisting that BOE's take a stand on important issues before they blow up can be key. You can have your BOE pass model resolutions to protect and support LGBTQ+ staff and students. Contact local BOE representatives and share the resolution with them. Invite them to lead the charge on adopting the resolution for their BOE. Follow up with Board members. Invite chapter or community members to speak about the resolution during public comment. The QR code goes to a model resolution template to get you started.



### Participate in CEA PRIDE

- What is it?: CEA PRIDE is CEA's LGBTQ+ advocacy group that provides tons of resources and support for our LGBTQ+ members and allies. We operate like a GSA but for the members. We have monthly meetings, newsletters, socials, workshops, etc. throughout the year. In addition, we provide multiple professional development sessions on LGBTQ+ rights in education for schools who request it, or to local associations. Information can be found on our website [www.cea.org/pride](http://www.cea.org/pride) and members can sign up for our listserve by emailing [christophert@cea.org](mailto:christophert@cea.org).



## Trevor Project, Suicide Prevention for LGBTQ+ Youth

- What is it?: Sadly, the statistics of LGBTQ+ Youth who experience suicidal ideation were already over 45% prior to the recent inflammation of culture wars and are only expected to rise. The Trevor Project is an American nonprofit organization founded in 1998. Focused on suicide prevention efforts among LGBTQ+ youth, they offer a toll-free telephone number where confidential assistance is provided by trained counselors. If you find yourself with LGBTQ+ students in crisis, they can help, [www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org)



## LGBTQ+ Student Guide to Welcoming Higher Ed

-What is it?: Sometimes students need to know that things can get better. With everything coming down from the Federal Government right now it can be very difficult to determine what LGBTQ+ life might look like when they matriculate to college. The following link: <https://www.intelligent.com/lgbtq-online-college-student-guide/> goes to an organization where students can look up how LGBTQ+ affirming a potential college might be for them and help them make informed choices about their education.

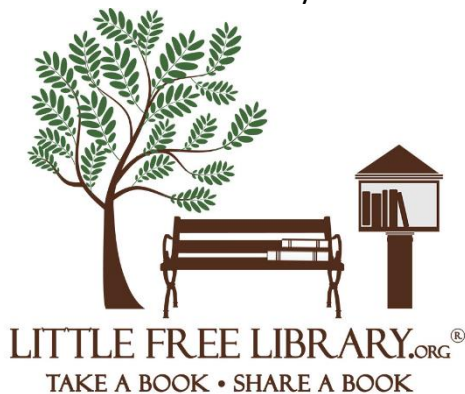
## ACTIONS THAT CAN BE TAKEN WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS

What happens when all of the above actions seem impossible in your district? Maybe you think your district is more hostile to LGBTQ+ issues and is already actively fighting against them. Here are some ways you can push back and advocate outside the box.



### Banned Book Clubs

- What is it?: BOE's have wide discretion in curriculum, But they have less power to ban student clubs (as previously stated, they are protected by the Equal Access Act).
- As we all know students love doing what they are told not to do. Banned Book Clubs can be a great end run around book bans. Some tips, follow school rules on club formation and make sure the club is student led, student run. Have students choose which books to read and help facilitate, but let students lead discussion. Partner with community to provide resources, lots of independent book stores are willing to provide banned books for you to read.



### Little Free Library Donations

- What is it?: If your district or town is cracking down on LGBTQ+ content in general, one way to get around this is little free library donations of LGBTQ+ affirming books. This can be a way to have more visibility outside of the school system.



## **Safety Escort Program**

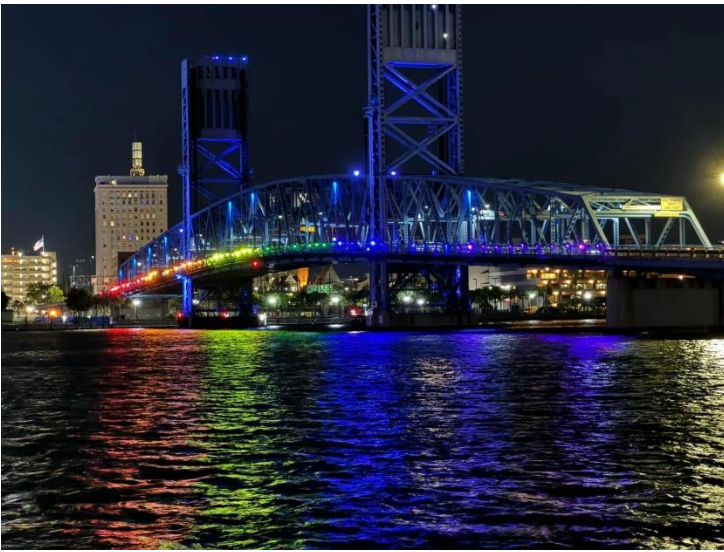
What is it?: One of the worst indignities LGBTQ+ students face is the extra scrutiny over basic human needs such as use of bathroom and locker room facilities. To help alleviate this stress, you can set up an informal system of safety escorts for students that request them. The easiest way to accomplish this is to have a sign up sheet for staff who wish to volunteer to be a safety escort if requested by a student. This list can be given to the school's GSA or other supportive administrators (if discussed with them first) so a student knows who to go to when asking for assistance.



## **Rainbow School Supplies**

-What is it?: Speaks for itself, but this can be a “hide the vegetables” approach. If you find yourself in a situation where you buy some school supplies for the students, there's no reason they can't at least be rainbow colored. Little Johnny needs a pencil today? Here's a rainbow pencil. Pretty much any school supply you can think of can be an opportunity to indicate your classroom is just a little more welcoming.





## **Alternative Pride Themes**

What is it?: Districts often get caught up in battles over display of pride flags. The good news about that is, it's just colors! There are many ways to get around this. When Florida banned lighting bridges in pride colors, residents lined up holding lights in the formation of a pride flag, thus completely negating the erasure effect they were looking for. The same principle can be applied to schools. Is your school cracking down on pride displays? You can do walk-in demonstrations with 6 volunteers wearing, each wearing a red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet t shirt and walking in rainbow order into school. Or try wearing colored pens attached to your lanyard in rainbow order, or even put colored pencils in rainbow order in your breast pocket. Students will notice, and it will have the same effect.