

# Sen. Baldwin, Rep. Pocan: Reintroduce Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act to address campus bullying and harassment

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**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Today, U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Patty Murray (D-WA), and Representative Mark Pocan (D-WI) re-introduced the *Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act of 2021*, legislation to address bullying and harassment—including cyberbullying—at colleges and universities around the country. The lawmakers introduced the bill on the anniversary of the death of Tyler Clementi, a freshman at Rutgers University, who tragically lost his life to suicide in 2010 after his roommate and another student invaded his privacy and harassed him due to his sexual orientation.

The bill would require colleges and universities to establish policies to prohibit harassment based on actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or religion, and require schools to recognize “cyberbullying” as a form of harassment.

“No student should live in fear of being who they are at school,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “By reintroducing this legislation, we are taking a strong step forward in not only preventing harassment on campus, but also making sure our students have

the freedom to learn and succeed in safe and healthy environments. Everyone at our colleges and universities deserves to pursue their dreams free of harassment and bullying.”

“Every student deserves to feel safe, full stop. But for too many students, campus bullying and harassment just devastates their mental, emotional, and physical health—in particular LGBTQIA+ students, who are nearly twice as likely to face this type of abuse. And this is all in the middle of a pandemic that has made mental health issues even worse,” **said Senator Murray.** “Our legislation would require colleges to establish strong policies that ensure everyone—no matter who they are or who they love—can pursue higher education free from discrimination, harassment, or bullying. I’m proud to join my colleagues in honoring Tyler Clementi’s life by working to make sure what happened to Tyler, never happens to another student.”

“Today we honor the life of Tyler Clementi by reintroducing this critical legislation. No one should be bullied because of who they are or who they love,” **said Rep. Pocan.** “This bill will help ensure that students can learn in peace and not have to worry about living in fear or humiliation for being themselves.”

Today, bullying and harassment are still widespread in higher education—and LGBTQIA+ students are [nearly twice as likely](#) to experience it as their non-LGBTQIA+ peers. The consequences can be severe for students’ mental health, particularly in light of the pandemic, which has compounded existing mental health challenges. In fact, throughout the pandemic, [65% of LGBTQIA+ college students](#) faced moderate or severe mental health challenges—and 22% felt that they had no social or emotional support system.

The *Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act of 2021* would help address campus bullying and harassment and keep students safe by:

- requiring all colleges and universities receiving federal aid to prohibit the

harassment of enrolled students based on their actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or religion;

- requiring school to recognize “cyberbullying” as a form of harassment; and
- creating a grant program to help colleges and universities start or expand programs to prevent harassment and provide counseling services to students who have experienced harassment.

“We are grateful to Congressman Pocan and Senators Murray and Baldwin for reintroducing the Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act, and fully supporting this legislation,” **said Jane Clementi, Tyler’s mother and CEO and Co-Founder of the Tyler Clementi Foundation.** “We believe all institutions of higher education should have policies to keep all their students safe. Because every student deserves a positive educational experience in a safe environment free of harassment, bullying or humiliation, where they can learn, study and thrive regardless of their race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or whatever else makes them special and precious; and every parent should have peace of mind that their children will be protected and free of harm while in the school’s care.”

“The Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act is an important step toward making America’s colleges and universities safer and more affirming for LGBTQ+ students by requiring the establishment of policies that prohibit harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity,” **said JoDee Winterhof, Human Rights Campaign Senior Vice President, Policy & Political Affairs.** “Senator Murray, Senator Baldwin, and Representative Pocan’s steadfast leadership championing this crucial bill will not only save lives, the legislation will support institutions in fostering inclusive and supportive learning environments that allow all students to thrive.”

“All students deserve to learn with safety, dignity, and respect,” **said Emily Martin, Vice President for Education & Workplace Justice at the National Women’s Law Center.** “This bill ensures schools treat harassment

against all students seriously, including online harassment, which has unfortunately increased during the pandemic. No student should have to endure what Tyler Clementi experienced, and we are proud to support this important bill.”

A fact sheet for the *Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act* can be found [here](#).

The full bill text can be found [here](#).

An online version of this release is available [here](#).