



OFFICE OF CONGRESSWOMAN LOIS FRANKEL (FL-21) | APRIL 28, 2022

Reps. Frankel, Casten Introduce Legislation to Protect K-12 Students from Sexual Harassment, Assault in School

Washington, DC – Today, Representatives Lois Frankel (FL-21) and Sean Casten (IL-06) introduced the *Stop Sexual Harassment in K-12 Act*, comprehensive legislation to combat sexual harassment and assault in K-12 schools by creating clear standards and funding streams for schools to uphold students' Title IX rights.

"School should be a safe place for students to learn and grow, free from the fear of sexual assault or harassment," **said Rep. Frankel**. "This bill will protect our children by ensuring students are aware of their rights and have access to the tools they need to pursue their education free from sexual misconduct in the classroom."

Congressman Sean Casten said, "At least one in four female and one in six male students face sexual abuse, but right now, our schools simply don't have the resources and guidance under Title IX to protect students from sexual harassment, assault, and other forms of discrimination that interfere with equal access to education. The *Stop Sexual Harassment in K-12 Act* will provide schools with clear standards and resources necessary to keep our students safe. As we work to address learning loss, socioemotional, and mental health issues that have left students vulnerable in the wake of the pandemic, it's more important than ever that we equip our schools to meet the needs of all students and protect them from sexual harassment and abuse."

Kenyora Parham, Executive Director of End Rape on Campus said, "Sexual harassment is a public health crisis and it's not just happening on college campuses. K-12 students experience sexual harassment at an alarming rate and many schools do not have the resources or guidance to address it. The *Stop Sexual Harassment in K-12 Act* will make a concerted effort to provide funding, clarity on the roles and responsibilities of Title IX Coordinators; and developmentally appropriate training for students, teachers, and other community members. An inclusive national climate survey will help ensure that we understand the scope of the problem, including representing the perspectives of students of color, LGBTQ+ students, and students with disabilities who are disproportionately targeted for sexual harassment. We have confidence that this bill will serve as a critical guardrail to make sure K-12 schools' responses to stop sexual harassment are effective and appropriate."

According to the [National Sexual Violence Resource Center](#), one-in-four girls and one-in-six boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18. A 2019 study by the [Journal of Sexual Abuse](#) also found that 10 percent of K-12 students would experience sexual abuse or misconduct by school employees, and that low-income, female high school students are the most at-risk. Yet, [more than 85 percent of schools reported zero allegations](#) of sexual misconduct, which is in stark contrast to the rates reported in victimization surveys, suggesting that many students are not reporting their experiences.

Specifically, the *Stop Sexual Harassment in K-12 Act*:

- Clearly defines the role and responsibilities of a Title IX coordinator in a K-12 school;
- Sets guidelines on how many full-time educators serving as Title IX coordinators a school district needs, given the size of their student body;
- Prevents people with conflicts of interest (e.g. the principal) from serving as Title IX coordinators;
- Encourages confidential reporting of sexual assault, so students are not deterred from seeking help;
- Provides training to students and teachers about what to do if they see or experience Title IX violations;
- Creates a national climate survey so we can get better data about where and how often harassment and assault are occurring;
- Ensures these trainings, surveys, and processes are age-appropriate for each grade level, and;
- Provides funding to schools to help them implement these provisions.

The bill has been endorsed by the National Education Association, National Women's Law Center, End Rape on Campus, and the Association of Title IX Administrators.

Bill text can be found [here](#).

###

Felicia Goldstein, J.D.

District Chief of Staff

Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

Congresswoman Lois Frankel (FL-21)

2500 N. Military Trail Suite 490

Boca Raton, FL 33431

561 998-9045 Office

561 998-9048 Fax

Felicia.Goldstein@mail.house.gov