



Parents for Choice in Education

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Myths versus Facts Surrounding Bill 10

MYTHS	FACT
Bill 10 merely allows GSAs to exist in schools.	Prior to Bill 10, GSAs were already legally permitted in all Alberta schools. The principal of each school had the authority, entrusted to her or him by parents, to grant or deny a request for a GSA.
Bill 10 does not apply to Catholic schools and other religious schools.	Bill 10 applies to “a school operated by a board”, which means every school in Alberta.
Schools can refuse a GSA if the principal and/or parents are against it.	Bill 10 says that a principal “shall” permit the establishment of a GSA if one or more students request one. This “request” (which effectively functions like a demand) can be put to the principal or any teacher. The principal is legally obligated to say “yes” to a GSA.
Bill 10 is limited to student clubs.	In addition to what Bill 10 says about student clubs, Bill 10 expressly authorizes the holding of an “activity” such as a Gay Pride Day, a raising of the rainbow flag, or the hosting of an outside speaker on “diversity” or “non-discrimination”. The principal no longer has any legal authority to refuse a student demand to hold an “activity” at the school. Parents’ concerns are irrelevant under Bill 10.
Religious schools can still refuse to have a GSA, by establishing their own anti-bullying club.	Bill 10 denies principals the right to refuse a “voluntary student organization” requested by one or more students. A club established by the school itself likely does not qualify as a “voluntary student organization.” A single student can claim that a school’s anti-bullying club was not a ‘voluntary student organization’ or that it does not promote “diversity”, therefore arguing that the school’s anti-bullying club does not fulfill the law.
Bill 10 is limited to GSAs. The new law cannot be used or abused by various special interest groups seeking to promote their views to children.	Bill 10 applies to any and all school clubs, as well as “activities”, which “intend to promote a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging”. These words from Bill 10 can be used by any group that wishes to promote its beliefs or goals to students through a student club or “activity”.
Catholic schools and other religious schools in Alberta can have their own anti-bullying clubs that are not called “gay-straight alliances” or “queer-straight alliances”.	Section 35.1(3) empowers students (not parents, teachers and principals) to choose the club’s name. Students must “consult” the principal about the name, but do not need her or his permission to call their club a “gay-straight alliance” or “queer straight alliance”.
Parents still have a say as to what clubs are permitted at the school where their children attend.	Even if 100% of the parents of a particular school believe that they have a better solution to bullying than GSAs the school’s principal has no legal authority to act on parental concerns.
Bill 10 respects the autonomy of schools to make their own decisions about anti-bullying policies.	If neither the school’s principal nor any of its teachers are willing or able to help establish and maintain a GSA, the Minister will appoint an outsider (“responsible adult”) to work with the students to establish a GSA, or to organize an “activity”. Therefore individuals that have not been vetted by the parents, educators or principal can be given supervisory authority of the school’s students by the Minister, who could appoint a political activist, or any person who is hostile to the school’s mission, vision and purpose.

Myths vs. facts surrounding Bill 10 was taken and adapted directly from: *GSAs-What Alberta parents should know about Bill 10*, published at www.parentchoice.ca