



Assemblymember Sebastian Ridley-Thomas  
State Capitol, Room 2176  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 23 (Ridley-Thomas) – OPPOSE**

Dear Assemblymember Ridley-Thomas,

The Hollywood Chapter of the National Organization for Women (Hollywood NOW), along with the National Organization of Women (NOW) and its California chapter (California NOW) opposes your AB 23 (Ridley-Thomas), which would authorize public single-sex schools and classes in California. NOW is the largest organization of feminist grassroots activists in the United States, with hundreds of thousands of contributing supporters and members in chapters in all 50 states. We are committed to protecting all of our nation's students from sex discrimination and sex stereotyping, and strengthening our coeducational public school system to provide better opportunities for all students, regardless of sex. We believe that gender separation in public education is neither necessary or effective, nor wise.

Many single-sex education programs are based on harmful stereotypes and debunked science about the purported brain differences and learning styles of boys and girls, concepts that have been rejected by leading neuroscientists, psychologists and educators. Studies have shown single-sex education to be ineffective in improving academic performance and possibly harmful to students.

The bill also conflicts with the state's Constitution, which treats gender classifications as suspect and requires them to be narrowly tailored to advance a compelling governmental interest.

AB 23 will also hurt LGBTQ youth, gender non-conforming youth, and youth who do not identify on the gender binary (who identify as neither male nor female, both, or something else). Transgender students who transition will likely be forced to change schools or programs and non-binary students will not have their identities recognized or respected.



Finally, we believe that a coeducational school environment is an important place for boys and girls to begin to view each other as equal peers in academics, extracurricular activities, social circles, and later, the workplace and family life. We believe that creating public single-sex education will only reinforce harmful stereotypes that set back the goal of true equality of opportunity for our children.

For these reasons, we oppose AB 23.

Sincerely,

John Erickson  
President  
Hollywood NOW