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Injustice at Every Turn

A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey

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KEY FINDINGS IN EDUCATION

What emerges clearly from the following data is that in education, as in other areas of life, survey participants faced high levels of harassment and violence. For participants in the study, this mistreatment is highly correlated with lower levels of educational attainment, lower income and a variety of other negative outcomes from homelessness to suicide.

- Those who expressed a transgender identity or gender non-conformity while in grades K-12 reported **alarming rates of harassment (78%), physical assault (35%) and sexual violence (12%)**.
- The **harassment was so severe that it led nearly one-sixth (15%) to leave school** in grades K-12 or in higher education settings.
- Six percent (6%) of respondents were expelled in grades K-12 for their gender identity/expression.
- Teachers and staff members, whose job in part includes ensuring student safety, were too often the perpetrators of harassment and violence in K-12. **Thirty-one percent (31%) of the sample reported harassment by teachers or staff**, 5% reported physical assault by teachers or staff and 3% reported sexual assault by teachers or staff.
- Negative experiences at school varied by gender and race. **Students of color experienced higher rates of harassment and violence across the board**. In terms of gender, MTF students reported higher rates of violence, while FTM and gender non-conforming students reported higher rates of harassment and bullying.
- Nineteen percent (19%) of respondents expressing a transgender identity or gender non-conformity in higher education reported being denied access to gender-appropriate housing. **Five percent (5%) were denied campus housing altogether**. Eleven percent (11%) lost or could not get financial aid or scholarships because of gender identity/expression.
- Despite mistreatment in school, respondents reported **considerably higher rates of educational attainment** than the general population, with 47% receiving a college or graduate degree, compared with only 27% of the general population. These high levels of achievement appear to be largely due to respondents returning to school later in life.
- **Educational attainment did not provide respondents the protection against poverty** that is common in the United States. At each level of educational attainment, our respondents had considerably lower incomes than the general population. Our sample was 4-5 times more likely to have a household income of less than \$10,000/year at each educational category, including college graduates.
- **Experiences of mistreatment in school correlated with lower income levels**. Those who reported mistreatment in school were 50% less likely to earn \$50,000/year than the general population.
- **Those respondents who said they were physically assaulted at school** due to gender identity/expression were **twice as likely to have done sex work** and other work in the underground economy and were **50% more likely to be incarcerated**.
- **For those who had to leave school** due to harassment, **nearly half (48%) reported having experienced homelessness**.
- **Those who were mistreated in school had higher rates of drug and alcohol abuse and smoking** to cope with the mistreatment. For those who were physically assaulted or had to leave school due to harassment, rates of misuse of alcohol and drugs doubled.
- **Respondents who reported having to leave school due to harassment** were HIV-positive at a rate of 5.14%, **more than eight times the HIV rate of the general population, 0.6%.²**
- **More than half (51%) of respondents who were harassed, physically or sexually assaulted, or expelled because of their gender identity/expression reported having attempted suicide**. Of those who were physically assaulted by teachers/staff or students, 64% reported having attempted suicide. And **three-quarters (76%) of those who were assaulted by teachers or staff reported having attempted suicide**.