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## South Dakota lawmakers defeat pro-transgender bathroom policy bill

Bill would have required all schools to report their policies regarding which restrooms transgender students may access

By John Riley on February 12, 2018

A South Dakota House committee voted to table a proposed bill that would have required schools to write and publicly report their individual policies on transgender students' access to restrooms.

The House Judiciary Committee voted 11-1 to table the bill, effectively killing it for the session, with many lawmakers expressing fatigue over recent fights regarding transgender issues.

Two years ago, the legislature passed a bill that would have barred transgender students from accessing facilities that don't comport with their biological sex at birth, but the bill was eventually vetoed by Republican Gov. Dennis Daugaard.

Supporters of the bill argued that the bill was necessary to ensure schools weren't advancing a "political agenda" of encouraging students to question their gender, reports the *Argus Leader*.

By requiring schools and school districts to publish their restroom policies, the public would be able to know what to expect when they send their children to school or when they use school facilities for meetings or other community events.

"Can we have the schools step up to the plate and have a policy so that we can actually discuss policy?" said Florence Thompson, a conservative activist and supporter of the bill. "What we have now is they hide behind not having a policy, or they say they have a policy but they won't tell you what it is."

But opponents of the bill said it's yet another example of a conservative legislature proposing bills to fix problems that are nonexistent.

"We've asked repeatedly to allow school boards and local schools to handle these issues, so let's let them handle it," said Wade Pogany, the executive director of Associated School Boards of South Dakota.

Indeed, part of Daugaard's veto of the "bathroom bill" two years ago was that individual schools were best suited to make policy on their own regarding accommodations for transgender students, rather than having a one-size-fits-all policy.

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