Safe Schools Coalition endorses HB 3026-S2 because:

- One could argue that discrimination in schools is already prohibited by Washington State’s anti-discrimination law under the rubric of “public accommodations.” But no student or parent or principal should have to research the meaning of a phrase in a law to make sense of it. Laws should be written to be clear and unambiguous to the ordinary resident of the state, not just to legislators and attorneys.

- One could argue that some discrimination is already covered under Washington State’s anti-bullying law. But principals and families need all the tools we can provide to protect children. A principal, for instance, sought advice from Safe Schools Coalition when a group of kindergartners wouldn’t allow a classmate to use the bathroom because she didn’t look to them “enough like a girl.” He should have tried handling it as a harassment situation and insisted that her classmates treat her respectfully. But he should also have had at his disposal a law explicitly expecting the school to make reasonable accommodations for this child if, for instance, the most humane solution turned out to be allowing her to use the nurse’s single-stall bathroom.

By far our major reason for endorsing 3026-S2 is that:

- For the first time ever, it would give the superintendent of public instruction responsibility for monitoring and enforcing compliance … which schools, frankly, appreciate. Requiring them to protect children frees them from having to defend their protective decisions. It gives them a concrete rationale for following best practices and allows them to make schools safe and respectful without divisive, time-consuming debate.

Please pass this bill.