

YWCA Call to Action: Email script for Michigan Senate Committee

Contact your Senate Committee Representatives on Education and Career Readiness, and encourage them to bring the **Strong Attendance for Every (S.A.F.E.) Student Act – SB68 and SB69 - to a vote!**

Email to each of the following:

Senator Lana Theis (R) Committee Chair - SenLTheis@senate.michigan.gov

Senator Kenneth Horn (R) Majority Vice Chair- SenKHorn@senate.michigan.gov

Senator Dayna Polehanki (D) Minority Vice Chair and Cosponsor of legislation - sendpolehanki@senate.michigan.gov

Email Script: *If you wish, please add your own thoughts to your communication to your elected officials.*

Greetings engaged committee member of the Senate Committee on Education and Career Readiness,

My name is *(insert name)* and I *(live/work)* in the city/town of *(insert city/town)*, Michigan. *(Include the name of your YWCA if you are an employee)* I am emailing to encourage the Senate Committee on Education and Career Readiness to bring the **Strong Attendance for Every Student, or S.A.F.E. Student Act**, to a public hearing or committee vote!

The S.A.F.E. Student Act, referred to your committee as SB68 and SB69, is important legislation that helps to address *school pushout*, which are bias and exclusionary policies, practices, and procedures that schools over-rely on to correct various non-violent behaviors and actions. However, these policies and practices are disproportionately impacting students of color by the way they are administered. *Currently, in Michigan, Black students make up 18% of the student population but make up 45% of the state's "out-of-school" suspensions.*

The S.A.F.E. Student Act amends the current MI School Code and prioritizes **learning** instead of automatic punishment, by addressing four main areas:

1. Mandating no student is allowed to be suspended or expelled solely for being truant or chronically absent because this will only make it harder to catch up!
2. Accountability through disaggregated data reporting: The S.A.F.E. Act would require schools across Michigan to submit a report with data on absences and suspensions/expulsions to their district's superintendent.
3. Creating shared definitions of "attendance", "participation", and "excused absences", and thus how students are treated.
4. The S.A.F.E. Act under SB69 also establishes an Education and Equity Advisory Committee that will support the MDE in measuring the effectiveness of school safety programs as it relates to incidences of non-violent offenses.

Equity inside our school system is vital in the time of COVID-19 when students are already struggling. Grace, a 15-year-old, Birmingham, MI native, was sentenced to juvenile detention because of her lack of attendance to online school. It is unacceptable that a child should be criminalized instead of supported in their education journey and we have to begin to do something different if we want to create meaningful and equitable change inside our school systems.

Thank you for hearing my concerns. Again, I urge you to advocate for students in Michigan by bringing The S.A.F.E Student Act to a hearing and committee vote, so all students can be fully present in school!

My Regards,

[Enter your name here]

**eliminating racism
empowering women**

ywca