

Despite Atheist Demands, One State Fights Against Transgender Pressure

Lawmakers in South Dakota may create a law requiring transgender students to use bathrooms and locker rooms corresponding to their sex at birth.

The measure was passed in the state Senate Tuesday and now it's up to Gov. Dennis Daugaard to sign it into law.

Despite his initial positive response to the measure last week, Daugaard said he needed more time to study it before making a decision.

Under the plan, schools would have to provide a "reasonable accommodation" for transgender students, such as a single-occupancy bathroom or the "controlled use" of a staff-designated restroom, locker room or shower room.

Supporters say the bill would protect students' privacy, but opponents argue it's discriminatory.

Republican Sen. David Omdahl urged legislators to support the bill to "preserve the innocence of our young people."

The American Civil Liberties Union of South Dakota and the Human Rights Campaign have both been vocal in their opposition to the measure and have called on Daugaard to veto the legislation.

The Family Heritage Alliance Action praised the state Senate's approval of the bill.

"We think the bill compassionately helps those students who are gender confused," spokesman Dale Bartscher told *Argus Leader*, a South Dakota newspaper.

"I'm telling you right now, it's about protecting the kids, and I don't even understand where our society is these days," Omdahl said.

If approved, South Dakota would be the first state in the nation to put such a measure into law.