

# LGBTQ+ Students

## & The Right to Bring a Date to your School's Dance

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In public schools in the U.S., LGBTQ+ students have a right to attend and enjoy school dances just like anyone else. You also have a legal right to bring a date of any gender identity and sexual orientation. Even though you sometimes hear about schools barring same-sex couples from dances, doing so is likely to be **against the law**.

According to the **First and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution and Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972**, your public school has a legal obligation to respect the sexual orientation of all its students and not to discriminate against students on the basis of their sex - this includes at school dances.

In other words, you can bring anyone you want to as a date to your school's dance, as long as they are also in high school, regardless of who they are. Whether you want to bring your boyfriend, girlfriend, partner, or just a friend, you both have a right to attend your dance together without discrimination, no matter what either of your gender identities or sexual orientations are.

**The rights of  
LGBTQ+ students  
are protected by the  
U.S. Constitution**

**If you experience discrimination or harassment on the basis of your sexual orientation or gender identity while attending your school's dance, please contact:**

**[www.LambdaLegal.org/HelpDesk](http://www.LambdaLegal.org/HelpDesk)**

## What to do if you face trouble bringing a date to your dance:

1. Ask a supportive adult for help.

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2. Ask your principal to state the reasons you are being denied entry to your dance in writing.

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3. If your school says that you need a parent's permission to attend, ask your principal, *in writing*, whether parental permission is required for *all* students.

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4. If you are stopped from entering, ask for the person in charge of the event and tell them that LGBTQ+ students have the same rights as all students to attend school dances and to dance together.

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5. If you are denied entry to your dance, or if anyone continues to give you trouble after the fact, contact our Help Desk.



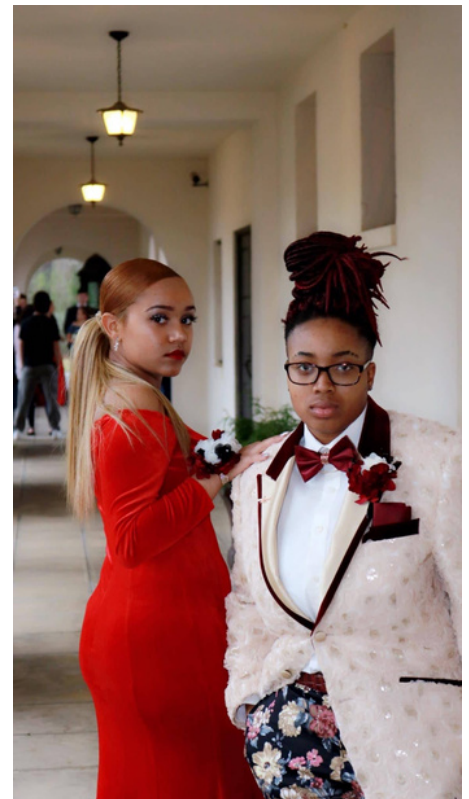
## *Fricke v. Lynch*

In 1980, a federal court upheld high school senior Aaron Fricke's right to bring his male date to prom. The court also ruled that how other students might react to Aaron and his date did not justify banning them. Nearly four decades later, we still have to remind schools of clearly established students' rights.

## *Janizia Ross, Alabama*

In 2018, Lambda took charge when a principal from eastern Alabama's Calhoun County School District was clearly discriminating against two lesbian students. After Janizia made a prom-proposal to Raven at their school talent show, to adoring cheers from the crowd, their principal invoked "Christian values," and disciplined Janizia. To add salt to the wound, a straight marriage proposal was made at the same talent show a year prior with no disciplinary action taken.

Lambda Legal sent a letter to the District Superintendent and High School Principal underscoring the school district's legal responsibility, according to the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution and Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, to respect the sexual orientation of all its students and not to discriminate against students on the basis of their sex. After our letter, the school district confirmed that the couple could attend prom together.



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