



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

OCT 08 2023

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 596 without my signature.

This bill would make it a misdemeanor to cause substantial disorder at any meeting of the governing board of a school district, the governing body of a charter school, a county board of education, or the State Board of Education. This bill also specifies that a person who subjects a school employee to threats or harassment while the employee is away from a school site or after school hours for reasons related to the employee's course of duties would be guilty of a misdemeanor.

Credible threats of violence and acts of harassment – whether directed against school officials, elected officials, or members of the general public – can already be prosecuted as crimes. As such, creating a new crime is unnecessary.

The tenor of our country's political conversations is alarming, leading to caustic atmospheres at local school board meetings and politicization of our kids' education in an effort to score political points. Nevertheless, we need to be cautious about exacerbating tensions by implementing additional laws that can be perceived as stifling parents' voices in the decision-making process. We don't need more gas on this fire – we need more grace, more respectful conversations, and more protection of constitutional rights for all people, especially for those with whom we disagree.

No school official should be subject to threats or harassment for doing their job, period. I encourage school officials to work closely with local law enforcement to use the laws already on the books to ensure the safety and security of our

community's educators and governing board members, both while carrying out their school duties on school premises and while away from school sites.

For these reasons, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gavin Newsom', is written over the printed name. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial 'G' and a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Gavin Newsom