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[Missions](#)
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[Persecution](#)
[Perspectives](#)
[Politics-Gov't](#)

'Equal footing' act puts more pressure on other foot

Bill Bumpas - OneNewsNow - 3/4/2010 5:20:00 AM



Concern is rising over a bill in Congress that would provide special protections for students who claim they are discriminated against because of their "perceived sexual orientation."

Earlier this year, Colorado representative Jared Polis introduced a bill known as The Student Non-Discrimination Act, or [H.R. 4530](#). The Democrat claimed the legislation would put homosexual students on "equal footing" with their peers, much as Title VI of the Civil Rights Act did for minorities and Title IX did for women.

But Neal McCluskey, associate director of the Center for Educational Freedom at the [Cato Institute](#), believes the government is using this bill to try and give people protective status based on their class.



McCluskey

"When government starts to say, 'No, because you belong to this group you get extra protection,' that's very disturbing," he comments. "We want equal protection under the law."

McCluskey adds that this legislation holds a more specific problem.

"It's such a broad definition that any student who might say anything remotely critical about homosexual lifestyles, any opinion they might have, could be punished under this law," he explains. "And if they're not punished for expressing what's a totally valid opinion, then the school could be punished, and that simply isn't acceptable in a free society because it curbs people's free speech rights."

The associate director concludes that the problem with government-run schools is that everyone's rights cannot be respected equally, and that is why he is an advocate for school-choice.



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