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# Opportunity Youth Action Hawai'i Policy Initiative

## Community Forum on Youth Safety: New DOH Data on LGBTQ+ Youth

On Saturday, June 3rd, Melissa Pavlicek and Leah Delos Santos attended a Community Forum on Youth Safety at Mililani High School, featuring Rep. Amy Perruso, Councilmember Matt Weyer, and Kimberly Allen from the Department of Health. Here, Melissa and Leah learned of the new data and statistics regarding LGBTQ+ youth in public schools.

The presentation focused on the health disparities among sexual and gender minority youth in Hawai'i. Most of the data was taken from a Youth Risk Behavior Survey that is conducted every two years in middle and high school. The statistics, to say the very least, were shocking. Some of these numbers are listed to the right.

Department of Health Director Kenny Fink described the physical and mental health issues faced by LGBTQ+ youth as a "huge public health problem" that needs to be addressed now.

Rep. Perruso and Councilmember Weyer discussed their efforts in comprehensive sex education and anti-bullying policies. They emphasized the need for collective action in the community to prioritize LGBTQ+ youth.

A large number of opportunity youth identify as LGBTQ+. It is our responsibility to support these children and young adults and fully accept who they are. That - in and of itself - could be lifesaving.

LGB youth are

**2-3x**

more likely to  
attempt suicide

**>1/3**

of trans youth have  
attempted suicide

LGBTQ+ youth suffer

**HIGHER**

risks of bullying, violence,  
and skipping school

Public high school youth:

**1/10** identify as LGB (**1/20** are questioning)  
**2.4%** are transgender (**2,000** are questioning)

Leah Delos Santos (far right) pictured with Rep. Amy Perruso (middle) and other youth and community leaders at the Community Forum on Youth Safety.



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