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Sen. Ghazala Hashmi's Statement on Defeat of Discriminatory and Divisive GOP Legislation

RICHMOND, VA — Senator Ghazala Hashmi (D-10), chair of the Senate Public Education Subcommittee, shared the recommendations of her subcommittee's findings on discriminatory and divisive GOP bills [SB20](#), [SB766](#), and [SB570](#) during today's full Senate Education and Health Committee. Based on the subcommittee's findings, Senator Hashmi made motions to *pass by indefinitely* on these bills, effectively killing the legislation. The Committee voted 8-5 on SB20 and 9-4 on SB570 and SB766, in agreement with the subcommittee's recommendations. Following the meeting, Senator Hashmi delivered a statement wherein she criticized her Republican colleagues for "intentionally targeting LGBTQ students" and for "fear-mongering around critical educational curricula that broadens our students' understanding of the complexities of the world in which they live."

"These bills targeted LGBTQ students and students of color," Senator Hashmi said. "They discriminate against transgender students in particular and put wasteful, wholly unnecessary barriers around what can be taught in Virginia's schools with the intent of whitewashing American history. Education is meant to develop students' abilities to think critically and to be challenged by ideas and experiences."

News of the Education and Health Committee's decision was praised by civil rights advocates as well as by transgender students and their families. "My son is a transgender middle schooler," said Kelly Carter Merrill of Hanover County, "and these bills—especially SB20 and SB766—would promote a school environment where bullying against transgender children festers. By rejecting this legislation, our school districts will be compelled to continue to work toward building an inclusive school climate for my child and other transgender students."

Thursday's vote follows the Committee's rejection last week of [SB275](#), a GOP-proposed bill to undermine school librarians and add undue burdens in the acquisition of school library materials. While this promotion of discriminatory, anti-education legislation has concerned Senator Hashmi, she reiterated her commitment to serving all Virginians as "a bulwark against the worst tendencies of the far-right."

"We're barely a month into session, and Republicans in the General Assembly have already made it clear what they're after," said Senator Hashmi. "They want to erase the experiences of those who are low-income, marginalized, or who are members of minority communities. I want my constituents to know that I will always stand firmly against discrimination, and will always fight to make Virginia a safe, welcoming, and nurturing place for all."

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