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February 25, 2014 -- The Board of Directors of the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) has just released the following position statement opposing the passage of Arizona's Anti-Gay Bill, and we encourage NAME members and other advocates for equity and civil rights to read, discuss, share, and act:

NAME Position Statement on Arizona's Anti-Gay Bill

The National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) joins with advocates of civil rights across the state of Arizona and amplifies our nation's founding principles of liberty and justice for all by calling on Arizona Governor Brewer to veto the pending "Religious Freedom Restoration Act" (House Bill 2153/Senate Bill 1062).

Known by many as the "right to discriminate" or the "do not serve gays" bill, this anti-gay legislation uses the concept of religious freedom to make it illegal to sue a business (including an individual, company, or church) for refusing to serve gay and other customers if the business owner believes that doing so violates their religious beliefs. That is, discriminating against such groups as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals because of religious beliefs would be allowable if this bill becomes law.

NAME condemns Arizona lawmakers for using the constitutional right of free exercise of religion, which we cherish and hold dearly, as a cover for discriminating against certain groups in society. The truly American value of religious freedom has everything to do with protecting the dignity, liberty, and agency of every human being, and should not be the basis for denying such protections for anyone, including and especially those groups that already experience discrimination and injustice.

NAME chose Arizona as the site of our 2014 annual conference in order to support the important work of educators, students, and advocates who are defending the right to a quality, relevant, empowering education in a time when ethnic studies is under intense attack in the Tucson Unified School District and beyond. We will be shining a national spotlight on ways that Arizona leads the nation in its racially unjust approach to education. We hope that Arizona will not again lead the nation in undermining the rights and dignity of its very own communities with the proposed, unjust approach to legalizing discrimination against LGBT Arizonans.

Governor Brewer has the opportunity to hold Arizona lawmakers accountable by reprimanding the legislature for even imagining this bill, and NAME calls on her to veto the bill and, instead, to insist that Arizona reaffirm its commitment to nurturing every one of its communities and peoples.

NAME urges its members and allies to raise your voice and demand the veto of this bill.