

Legislative History for Connecticut Act

**Act Number:** 119      2002  
**Bill Number:** 5425  
**Senate Pages:** 2489-2502      14  
**House Pages:** 1467-1492, 3171-3291      147  
**Committee:** Children: 224-236, 242-243, 258-259, 271-276, 314, 328, 339, 362, 387-390, 391-396, 437-457      58

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Transcripts from the Joint Standing Committee Public Hearing(s) and/or Senate  
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tally. For the members voting, that is the Consent Calendar.

THE CLERK:

Motion is on adoption of Consent Calendar No. 1.

Total Number Voting	36
Those voting Yea	36
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar is adopted.

THE CLERK:

Turning to the Calendar. Calendar Page 5, Calendar 421, File No. 379 and 607, Substitute for HB5425, AN ACT CONCERNING BULLYING BEHAVIOR IN SCHOOLS AND CONCERNING THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE. As amended by House Amendment Schedules B, C, and D. Favorable report of the Committees on Children, Education, and Appropriations. Clerk is in possession of Senate Amendments.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Williams.

SEN. WILLIAMS:

Thank you, Madam President. I move adoption of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

Question is on passage in concurrence. Will you remark?

SEN. WILLIAMS:

Yes, thank you, Madam President. Various questions have been raised about what we mean by the term "bullying." We mean that there are repeated overt acts with the intent to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate other students. And that these acts occur on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity.

These overt acts, known as bullying, have been tied to numerous problems at school. Disciplinary problems, problems that have resulted in acts of violence against children.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Williams, just a moment.

SEN. WILLIAMS:

Thank you, Madam President. Most of us remember the tragedy of Columbine and in the research and reports that came after that particular tragedy with the shooting and mass death at that school. Some of that information that came out indicated that there was a significant degree of such overt acts directed at certain students at that school.

It's not to say that these acts will result in every case in some form of sensational violence or

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tragedy. In many cases it will simply scar or harm the psyche of an individual child.

And, Madam President, over the long term, that can be also very destructive to our communities, and certainly to our school children. This bill would require that boards of education develop policies to address these overt acts known as bullying, to require that teachers and other school staff notify administrators when they hear of, or see such acts.

When they receive student reports of such acts that they investigate reports that come to them from parents of such activity. That the school board develop an intervention strategy for school staff so that they can deal with, and ideally resolve, these problems in their early stages before they become problems that require serious disciplinary action.

And the policy must also provide provisions such that the parents, or guardians, of the children who are involved in these overt acts, whether it is of the child who has been the subject of such ridicule and intimidation, or of the alleged perpetrators, that these parents be notified.

Also the school would need to keep records of the incidents so that they could understand the extent of the problem, and understand whether such policies put in

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place by the board would need to be modified in the future.

Madam President, there's a second portion of this bill as well, which was put on amendment in the House. And it does require that boards of education also set aside time each day, or develop a policy so that time is set aside each day to give students the opportunity to recite the pledge of allegiance.

It would not require that any student recite the pledge. But it would require that such time be set side. So again, to deal with what is a very serious problem, I move adoption of this bill in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

Question is on passage in concurrence. Will you remark? Senator Kissel.

SEN. KISSEL:

Thank you very much, Madam President. It just so happens that I have this opportunity to have my son next to me. And I look at him, and he's six years old, and he's a kindergartener. And, you know, here we have a bill about bullying.

And at the outset I want to commend Senator Williams, Representative Mary Mushinsky, who I've spoken to about this, and heard on the radio. And she's really

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been a staunch proponent.

And I'm sure that Senator Gaffey and Senator Herlihy had their hands in this as well as it touches education. But again, in looking at my young son and thinking back, you know, the world is so different than when we were young.

And we're a variety of ages in this Circle. But I think even our youngest member, it's at least ten or fifteen years since they've been in high school. And probably a fair twenty years since they've been in grammar school.

And the world has changed dramatically since that period of time. And there's a variety of factors. Indeed, there was a seminar put on here. I think there was an individual from the state of Oklahoma who was talking about point and shoot games, and computer generated violence, and real steep climbs as far as violent activities by young people.

I'm not saying that we know the solution just yet. But I really think a piece of legislation such as this is incredibly important. And I really want to commend the proponents. There are those individuals that simply don't feel that maybe this issue is important.

But, if you were a parent and your son or your daughter came home, and even if they were not physically

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bruised but their spirit was mangled by someone two, three, four years older than them, that was ruining their educational experience, ruining their childhood, something that you have once in your life and you can never get back again.

And you turn to the board of education, and it depended on whether they had a policy, they didn't have a policy. That's an unacceptable state of affairs. And I'm really glad that this state has finally made progress on this particular issue.

I think there's a lot more cases that involve bullies and bullying, and exertions of power in our schools than we're really aware of. And I think that we have to come to grips with that. Indeed, there was a gentleman, he was a member of Peter, Paul and Mary, came and spoke about this issue.

I think it was the beginning of last year. And I know that we came up with a, I believe it was either a pilot, or we had some funds available on a rather limited basis for schools. But this goes a much greater step forward.

And as I recall, from discussions of this issue, and other things that I've seen on television, that individuals involved in this deleterious activity, be they the bully, or the one bullied upon, tend to

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gravitate in far greater numbers to dysfunctional behavior and crime and other acts of violence.

Whether it's because they're antisocial behavior at the outset was never checked. Because either there's something not happening at home, and it's not being addressed in the schools, or conversely because they were victimized.

And to even the score in either a conscience or subconscious way, when they finally have the ability, they act out. And as Senator Williams said, sometimes those individuals who had been beaten upon and bullied, when they act out those acts of violence are far worse than what those bullies had done. But the bullies had done them time and time and time again.

So again, I think that when we have issues that we can address with young people, you know, quite often what we say to ourselves if only we knew how to get to the root of the problem.

Let me tell you. In north central Connecticut we have more prisoners than we know what to do with. State of Connecticut has more prisoners than it knows what to do with. We have, in many respects, a decrease in crime. But if you look at the statistics, I do believe, although there may be some slight fluctuations, over the last ten to fifteen years, a dramatic increase in crime

and violent crime by young people.

We need to get at the root of that problem. And if we get to the root of that problem, then it won't be tomorrow, it may be ten or fifteen years old, it may be thirty years, when God willing, maybe my son might be serving in this Circle.

But at that point we might see the beneficial impacts of a small, but very significant, step that we're taking here today with this legislation. And that's why I so strongly support it. And I commend all the advocates for being persistent and sticking with this so that we can get this law passed. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir. Will you remark further? Senator Gaffey.

SEN. GAFFEY:

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I join my colleagues in support of this legislation. Bullying is as old as the school yard is. But as we have looked at the evidence that has been presented to us in the Education Committee, as well as the Children's Committee, the incidents of bullying, not only have grown more in frequency, but they have grown more in the seriousness of the ramifications to the children who

have been subjected to bullying.

It's not just that kids get picked on from time to time. The fact of the matter is that there are children in school systems throughout Connecticut that are subjected to the intimidation, to the harangue, to the downright fear, of just going to school every day because they encounter bullying every day of the week.

And that's a shameful situation for a child who just wants to go to school, just wants to learn, just wants to experience the joy of being at school with their friends and their teachers to be subjected to this type of intimidation and humiliation time over time, over time, over time.

And I believe that this is a very, very real situation. Very serious situation. And, therefore, when we looked at this in the Education Committee, I thought it was extremely important that we allowed for children who are the students in the school, and those potentially subjected to this type of activity of intimidation and fear, to be able to anonymously report to the head of the school that these situations are occurring.

And whether it's the child that's being bullied, or a friend of a child that's being bullied, that they be able to make such an anonymous report. Now I know my

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friends who are with the Superintendents Association didn't really like this provision.

But none of them have been able to satisfy me that their concern with that provision overrules the concern of an eight-year child who is scared to death because they don't want to go around the corner to the school, because there are a couple of bullies there waiting for them day after day.

Or, for the child who sits in the cafeteria and has to put up with the intimidation and the humiliation of having cartons of milk dumped over their head time after time, and the ridicule they're subjected to.

We needed to allow children to make anonymous reports so they can be followed up on. Because of the fact, and it was suggested that they just be allowed to make confidential reports. It needed to be anonymous because kids aren't going to get themselves involved in situations where they tell on other kids, particularly when it's another kid that's going to beat the heck out of them.

Whether it's during school or after school. So I think that's one of the most important aspects of this legislation. Also, we have put a provision in here where we track verified acts of bullying.

And that's important because as time goes on, we're

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able to get our arms around how big of a problem this really is in the state of Connecticut. I know it's a problem. This allows us to verify how big of a problem it is.

And lastly, there was some chagrin with regard to the definition that we've included in this legislation. I think this is a fine definition. I think it encompasses exactly what is going on out there in the school districts where this type of unfortunate intimidation takes place.

So, Madam President, with that I congratulate all who have worked on this. I think it's a great piece of legislation and I look forward with anticipation to the signing of it into law. Thank you very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir. Senator Sullivan.

SEN. SULLIVAN:

Thank you, Madam President. My friend, Peter Yarrow, of Peter, Paul and Mary, who Senator Kissel was referring to, has not only contributed mightily nationwide to the campaign to deal with bullying in the schools, but he has also given us an anthem for this legislation and for that effort.

He sings, and I will not. I will only speak it.

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Don't laugh at me, don't call me names. Don't get your pleasure from my pain. In God's eyes we're all the same. Some day we'll all have perfect wings.

I, too, thank the people who've worked on this legislation and continue to move us forward to help the children understand that life as a bully or a bullied is no life. And that there is no room in our lives or in our schools for this inhumanity to one another. If we teach it well there, it is a lesson that lasts a lifetime.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Freedman.

SEN. FREEDMAN:

Thank you, Madam President. I, too, rise in support of this bill and want to commend all those people that played a role in bringing this, which I think happens to be excellent public policy, before our chamber tonight.

Senator Sullivan alluded to Peter Yarrow and his, Don't Laugh at Me. For someone who has been a teacher, who has watched children on the playground, watched children in the classroom, watched bullies trying to take over and trying to intervene to protect those children who don't know how to deal with all of this.

I think this is a step forward to the local communities in order to develop a policy that will now

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begin to identify and start working with those children who will desperately need our help.

As Senator Kissel mentioned, maybe by the time his children are through school some of this will have sunk in and there will be a level playing field for all children. No child should ever feel intimidated by another child. Just as we have history on families where there is abuse that seems to carry on from one generation to another, I think we can also document that where there is a bullying situation, that too carries on.

And so I go forward and hope that with great optimism we start here as this step. And that at some point Don't Laugh at Me will really mean there will be nobody laughing because we're all together and we understand the needs of children. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further? If not, would the Clerk please announce a roll call vote, the machine will be opened.

THE CLERK:

An immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the chamber.  
An immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.

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Will all Senators please return to the chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Have all members voted? Please check the machine to make sure your vote is properly cast. If all members have voted the machine will be locked. Clerk, please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Motion is on passage of HB5425 as amended.

Total Number Voting	36
Those voting Yea	36
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

The bill is passed. At this time the Chair will entertain points of personal privilege or announcements. Senator McDermott.

SEN. MCDERMOTT:

Thank you very much, Madam President. I rise for a point of personal privilege.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McDermott.

SEN. MCDERMOTT:

Thank you very much, Madam President. I just wanted to announce that in the gallery this evening I have a constituent, Nancy Getner from Wallingford, who has

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DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Are there any other announcements or points of personal privilege? Are there any other announcements? If not, the House will stand at ease.

(The House of Representatives stood at ease.)

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

The House will come back to order.

Are there any other announcements or points of personal privilege? If not, we will return to the Call of the Calendar.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 227.

CLERK:

On page 27, Calendar 227, Substitute for H.B. 5425,  
AN ACT CONCERNING BULLYING BEHAVIOR IN SCHOOLS.  
Favorable Report of the Committee on Appropriations.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky of the 85th.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

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The question before us is on acceptance and passage. Please proceed, Madam.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Clerk has an amendment, LCO 3490. If the Clerk would please call and may I summarize?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Will the Clerk please call LCO 3490, designated House "A".

CLERK:

LCO number 3490, House "A" offered by Representatives Mushinsky and Staples.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. This is a strike everything amendment. I would like to move adoption and then will summarize the new language.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

The question before us is on adoption. Please proceed.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. This amendment requires each local and regional board of education to develop a policy for use on and after October 1, 2002 to address

the problem of bullying in schools.

The policy shall include a way for students to anonymously report acts of bullying;

A requirement that staff or teachers who witness bullying notify the school administrators;

A requirement that administrators investigate such reports and intervention strategy for school staff to deal with bullying;

A provision for adding language to student codes of conduct regarding bullying;

A requirement to notify parents or guardians of students who commit verified acts of bullying and the parents of the students against whom, the victims, that is, against whom such acts were directed;

And a requirement that each school maintain a list of the total number of verified acts of bullying and make that list available for public inspection.

The amendment also creates a new standardized definition of "bullying" so all schools will recognize it.

This measure is of great interest to parents around the State. In my own area, thinking I was going to be meeting with five parents, I walked into a room of 50. It was a group that had formed quickly after a bullied child committed suicide and a second bullied child was

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prevented just before committing suicide.

I have learned from calls around the State that it is a chronic problem with long term repercussions to school learning, to school attendance, and can lead to violence in schools and beyond school years.

I urge your support for this amendment which will become the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Tercyak of the 26th.

REP. TERCYAK: (26TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. If there is anyone in this Chamber who is not aware of the seriousness of bullying, just talk about this proposed legislation to students from your district when they come here to the Capitol to visit.

As my fellow urban legislators and I agreed visiting students from our community, so far they've been coming here this year from grades four through twelve, we make a point of mentioning bullying. There is nothing, there is nothing that holds their attention more than any discussion about bullying.

It occurs in all grades. Children and youths see it, they hear it, and unfortunately, a number of them experience it.

The seriousness of bullying ranges from name

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calling to actual physical harm and as Representative Mushinsky just mentioned, even cause death.

That must stop. Bullying must stop. Students should never dread or fear going to school. School should be a learning experience. School should be a happy experience.

This legislation, if adhered to, will go a long way toward rectifying situations which should never, never occur in our schools.

This hurt must stop. Please join me in supporting this legislation and the amendment as discussed by Senator Mushinsky.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Heagney of the 16th.

REP. HEAGNEY: (16TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation. Though I have some reservations about the obligations and commitments we place on our boards of education because every time we turn and take a good idea, we create another obligation upon them and here it is a list and actions, but I think I join Representative Tercyak in recognizing that this is a problem that needs to be addressed. It's not the

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most severe problem and I'm not sure that this legislation can fully correct all of those things.

But what are we talking about? And I think that's important for us to identify that we're talking about acts that are designed to ridicule, to humiliate or intimidate a student. That they are not single and isolated acts. And they're not acts that occur in one day, but occur over a long period of time.

Additionally, there are acts that are directed at individual students by a student or by a group of students. And so they're not isolated incidents in which one student says something out of place or which a group of students take an act that was perhaps later thought ill of.

But Madam Speaker, I do have a question with regard to the present legislation and I would ask to direct that question to the proponent of the bill, through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Mushinsky, prepare yourself.

Please proceed, sir.

REP. HEAGNEY: (16TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Through you, I have an inquiry. In the amendment language you proposed the words, "pattern of overt acts". Could you tell me what

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you mean by that "pattern of overt acts"?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. We mean the acts are repeated over time. It is not a single act, one student throwing a punch at another student in the heat of the moment. It is a repeated repetition of overt acts by a student or a group of students directed against another.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Heagney.

REP. HEAGNEY: (16TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. And so by a pattern, you would be identifying something that does not happen solely on a single incident and would obviously not be involved, but would it also be require to be taken over a long period of time?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. That is correct. I can give you an example. One of the parents shared with me a sheaf of reports from the nurse's station. There were 40 reported acts against her child, everything from towel snapping causing welts to stomach punches, to

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other forms of harassment. But it was actually 40 different verified incidents.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Heagney.

REP. HEAGNEY: (16TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. And to go into the body of the bill where we're discussing the requirement that teachers and other school staff who witness acts of bullying, to report those.

Now, for legislative intent, would the proponent agree that a single act perhaps should be reported, even though it would not, perhaps, be a defined act of a pattern under this particular act?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. If I were a teacher, I would report to be on the safe side. This might be the first of 40 acts, but we are really trying to hone in on the repetitive behavior.

This particular line was inspired by an act in a middle school where teachers stood by while one child poured a carton of milk over another child's head in the

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view of the teachers and there was no intervention. And this child had been picked on for many weeks. This was just the latest incident. The teachers seemed to not know what to do when they witnesses an act of bullying in that particular school.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Heagney.

REP. HEAGNEY: (16TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. In the body of the act there's language that indicates that a list shall be maintained that is available for public inspection. Can you tell us what should be included on that list?

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. What we're looking for is a numerical count of the number of verified acts of bullying in such school in that year and have that list available for any parent to walk in and ask for it.

And the reason we felt this was important in the Children's Committee is to find out if the climate in the school toward bullying has changed over time. Is the number of bullying incidents going down? Or is it going up? And how does that school compare to the school on the other side of town where, perhaps, the administration is more vigorous in training the faculty

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and I want to point out here that there are programs available.

The Commission on Children worked with us in the Legislature last year to set up a grant program to offer training to the schools and what the Children's Committee discovered this year is that some of the schools don't apply for the money because they don't think they have a problem. Talk to the kids and the parents, you'll get an entirely different story.

So we're not looking for the names of the victims. We're not looking for the names of the bullies. We just want to know the number of verified acts of bullying in that school.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Heagney.

REP. HEAGNEY: (16TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Do you believe that maintaining such a list such as that might discourage administration from actually being proactive with regard to acts of bullying because they don't want to be the school that has the highest number of verified acts on their list?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. That is always possible. Right now, many of the schools are not acknowledging a problem within their school. We are hoping that this combination of information to the parents, which is required, and also the list of the number of verified acts together will help clear up that mystery.

Now, it still maybe possible that schools will downplay the number or under-report the number and in those cases, it will be harder for us to pull together the true number by talking to the parents in the community. It will be harder, but this is better than what we have now and that's my point here is that right now we have no reporting and no information.

In the case of the 40 complaints in one of the magnet schools, only 20 of them were still on record in the school. The other 20 had disappeared.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Heagney.

REP. HEAGNEY: (16TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Is it my understanding, through you, Madam Speaker, that you have sought and there is presently being prepared an amendment to this amendment to change the word "pattern" on line 22 such

that it could more clearly identify the kind of conduct that you're talking about?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. Yes. While we're doing this examination of the words in this amendment, a new amendment is on its way to further clarify that. It's always true that two or more lawyers in one room will come up with different ways to phrase things. That's true in this case, as well.

So, the lawyers have come to some agreement and the amendment is on its way.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Heagney.

REP. HEAGNEY: (16TH)

Well, Madam Speaker, I might say that's the most collegial description of two or more lawyers in one room that I've heard in some time.

With that, I will await the amendment and I thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Staples of the 96th.

REP. STAPLES: (96TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, very

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briefly on this amendment. I want to congratulate the Children's Committee for their work on this issue. And I think for those of us who followed the acts of violence in schools over the last decade around this country, in almost every single case where there has been an outbreak of some serious violence, further study demonstrated that there were acts of bullying that preceded the violence.

And in just about every case, the school system did not respond adequately to substantial evidence of bullying and mistreatment of students that occurred in their schools prior to a violent act.

We've not experienced acts of that kind, of that nature yet in this State and hopefully we'll never, but what I think the important part of this policy is that we're telling school districts to be proactive.

Representative Mushinsky mentioned earlier an incident where a teacher did not intervene and I think through the development of a school policy with specific requirements, we're hoping that we will never have incidents of bullying that become so paramount and so tragic that they result in violence in our schools.

I think this is just the right type of policy for us to adopt. It puts the onus on the school system to develop a greater detail of whether mental health

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intervention or other type intervention is necessary in a particular case, but it requires them to take some steps to ensure that violence will not occur by reason of our ignorance in how to respond to acts of bullying.

I think it's a good amendment and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Belden of the 113th.

REP. BELDEN: (113TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the amendment, but I did have an inquiry, if I might.

Who has control, through you to the proponent. Who has control of these youngsters when they're in the school buses coming and going from school?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. Are you referring to at the home where the child gets on the bus or as they're dismissed from the school?

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Representative Belden.

REP. BELDEN: (113TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. I'm referring to the time when the youngster gets on the bus until he gets off the bus when he comes back home.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. It's our intention that the bus ride is included in the school day. And, in fact, some of the incidents in New Haven that Cam could have spoken of, but didn't, were sexual humiliation and sexual assaults on little girls in the back of a bus on an official school trip.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Belden.

REP. BELDEN: (113TH)

Yes. Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would feel a lot happier if the amendment that's on its way further defined bullying in its school to say while under the jurisdiction of the board of education because the last couple of lines of the amendment talk about while on school grounds or at a school sponsored activity, which are limited. And so it's not clear at all whether or not while on a school bus would fall under the purview

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of the legislation before us and I'm asking the question because at least if it passes, I want it to be clear in the record that that is the intent.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. It is our intent that a school sponsored activity includes the bus ride to and from school.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you.

Representative Newton of the 124th.

REP. NEWTON: (124TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just a couple of questions to the proponent of the amendment.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. NEWTON: (124TH)

I look at line 21. For the purpose of this section, "bullying means any overt act by a student or group directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate the other student."

I know in some of our high schools, with basketball and football, you know how guys go through initiations

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and those kinds of things that some kids do on football fields. It's not an act of bullying, but it's an act of intimidation. It's an act of ridiculing and those kinds of things.

Would they fall under this jurisdiction should this become law?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. The amendment that's on its way addresses that a bit. But I will say to you that we're looking for the repetitive pattern against the same student. The sports events are usually not a repetitive pattern. Some of the school harassment, though, in athletics is at the point of physical violence and if that was my kid I would actually direct that assault to the police. Some of the kids are actually physically assaulted as part of the heckling and that's already a crime.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Newton.

REP. NEWTON: (124TH)

Thank you. Through you, Madam Speaker. We're allowing the boards of ed of each town to set up this

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policy on bullying, but I didn't notice anything in here, not only are children bullied, but I know in some incidents where teachers have been bullied and told if you tell that I've been messing with this kid, that I'm going to get to after school, blah, blah, blah, and so on.

I don't know if schools have policies on bullying. So I really don't know what each district does. But I'm just curious, would teachers also be included in this bullying amendment?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. This version of the bill does not include teachers. An earlier version did. This one does not.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Newton.

REP. NEWTON: (124TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. Can I ask, why not?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. The bill went through several committees and one of the committees deleted it.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

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Representative Newton.

REP. NEWTON: (124TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. Do you think teachers are bullied also in schools?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. I personally have seen some evidence of teacher bullying against a student.

They may not even have been aware that they were destroying that student's willingness to come to school, but they certainly were.

But we're trying to get at the most obvious problem that the parents brought to our attention. I would say 90% - 95% of those parents I met with, the complaint involved student versus student. So that's what we're addressing in this legislation.

The teachers, though certainly, in some cases, have been perpetrators of bullying, especially of the verbal kind. But we'll leave that for another day.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Newton.

REP. NEWTON: (124TH)

And through you, Madam Speaker. If a school system,

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if this is going to take effect, effective July 1, 2002, what is the penalty if a school board says we don't want to do it? I don't read anything in here, unless you can point it out to me, that holds a school board accountable for doing a bully policy if a school board decides and I'll use Bridgeport, I don't know if we have a bully policy or not. If Bridgeport says, we don't want to do that. What's to put some teeth in this to make sure if bullying is very important to this Legislature, that I think that if it's that important, we ought to put some ramifications in it should school boards not do something.

My question is, what's the ramification if a school board doesn't do it?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. We haven't specifically listed a penalty in this amendment. There are some generic lower level penalties that are in the statutes. We're not going to put one in at this time. We'll see how this works. My hunch is that when parents come in for the list and it's not there, that will - - and even news reporters, for that matter, when someone

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comes in and asks for the list and it's not there, I think that's going to cause enough of a stir that enforcement will happen.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Newton.

REP. NEWTON: (124TH)

Just one final question for legislative intent.

I'm a parent and I want to send my child to one of the schools, should this become effective. Will I be able to walk into any one of those schools and ask the school system for such a list of those kids who are troubled kids, those kids who have been "classified as bullies"? Is that the kind of list you're talking about?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. No, it is not. We are looking for a numerical count of incidents. So, say in your town, your city, one school had 20 incidents, another school had 23 incidents, another school had 140. Now, there's something going on in that one school, things are out of control. That school needs an anti-bullying program. So we're just looking for data in the

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form of numbers so we can hone in on the schools and say what's wrong with this school? Why haven't you asked for help in dealing with your bullying problem?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Newton.

REP. NEWTON: (124TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm probably going to support the intent, but what scares me is this. We've got a lot of failing schools around the State of Connecticut. And I'm just afraid that this might become another tool to add to those failing schools and I don't know where bullying takes place, whether it's in the rich schools or poor schools, I don't know. But because the Legislature has deemed the term word as a failing school based on the test scores, I'm just hoping that this won't be another stigma to our school systems in the State of Connecticut.

And I understand why we need it. I understand that there are children who pick on other children. I'm sure it's been in existence for a long time where you do have children who prey on other children. I'm just hoping that this does not become, as we've used the term "failing schools" that we also include this somehow in that category later on as we move in the educational system, that this would not be another stigma attached

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to the schools here in the State of Connecticut.

So I think the intent is one that is trying to get us somewhere, but I just hope in the future we don't take it and use it in another bad way which gives authorities more powers and I don't like to use the word "profiling" a lot or use those kinds of terms, but whenever we do things and give powers to other folks, I get a little nervous about that.

So I hope as this moves through, the Education Committee will look at this real seriously and make sure it's intended to do just what it is to identify those incidents and report it to our boards of ed because they've got the power and I didn't read that. I understand you've got the list, but it doesn't say where do you send the list. I think it should go to the boards of education that have powers over our school systems so they can do something about it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH).

Madam Speaker, to answer his two questions, which were in that very long statement, I want to reassure you, Representative Newton, that the problem is statewide. It is not simply urban schools.

Our committee got calls from Litchfield, from Canton, from Branford, from Wallingford, from Meriden,

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Manchester. Pretty much statewide. Even affluent towns. I was on a radio show in Fairfield County and somebody called me from Fairfield that he had been, his whole school life, he had been harassed to the point where he almost couldn't take it anymore and almost left the school.

So it is, unfortunately, a statewide problem.

Your other question is, do they have to send it anywhere? No, they do not. It stays in the school. This particular language was a big compromise section. It was rewritten several times. And the final compromise was that we would have a list, but it would be a local list.

So it is not being sent anywhere, but it is available for parents to check on, does their school have a problem? Is their school looking for help to deal with the problem? We want the school to get help, bring in somebody to train the school on how to fight bullying among the student population.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, Representative Mushinsky.

Representative Newton.

REP. NEWTON: (124TH)

For the second time, Madam Speaker. It just makes sense to me that if you're going to compile a list, just

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to leave it in the school, that does nothing to address those issues.

I think that once a school compiles the list, they ought to make that information available to their boards of ed that have the jurisdiction over those school systems. I mean, I think that makes a little more sense than just having a list that there was 140 bullying acts in a school and it just sits there.

So I would hope that it just doesn't sit in the school, that that information be forwarded to the boards of education so they can take the appropriate action that they need to address those bullying situations that might happen in the school system, Madam Speaker. And I would hope Representative Mushinsky would think about that, that it does no good to have it sit in the school system. I think it makes more sense to send it to the board of ed so they can take the appropriate action that needs to be taken in those incidents.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Pudlin from the 92nd -- 24th, I'm sorry.

REP. PUDLIN: (24TH)

It's a serious issue and I'm not trying to push

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anyone around. But I would ask that this bill at this time be PT'd, Madam.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Without objection, so ordered.

SPEAKER LYONS:

Representative Pudlin.

REP. PUDLIN: (24TH)

Madam, at this time I would ask that we suspend our House rules to take up --

SPEAKER LYONS:

I believe you would like to take up Calendar 350.

REP. PUDLIN: (24TH)

That's exactly the one I want to take up, Madam.

SPEAKER LYONS:

Thank you, sir.

REP. PUDLIN: (24TH)

Thank you.

SPEAKER LYONS:

Hearing no objection, the rules are suspended. Will the Clerk please call Calendar 350.

CLERK:

On page 19, Calendar 350, Substitute for S.B. 383,  
AN AT CONCERNING QUASI-PUBLIC AGENCIES. Favorable Report  
of the Committee on Government Administration and  
Elections.

H-873

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SPEAKER LYONS:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? Would members please check the board to make sure your vote is accurately recorded.

If all the members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally.

Will the Clerk please announce the tally.

CLERK:

H.B. 5561, as amended by House Amendment Schedule

"B"

Total Number Voting	143
Necessary for Passage	72
Those voting Yea	129
Those voting Nay	14
Those absent and not Voting	8

SPEAKER LYONS:

The bill, as amended passes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 227.

CLERK:

On page 23, Calendar 227, Substitute for H.B. 5425,  
AN ACT CONCERNING BULLYING BEHAVIOR IN SCHOOLS.  
Favorable Report of the Committee on Appropriations.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky of the 85th.

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REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

The question before us is on acceptance and passage. Please proceed, Madam.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Clerk has an amendment, LCO 3490, marked House "A". I seek permission to call and withdraw the amendment.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Will the Clerk please call LCO 3490, previously designated House "A".

CLERK:

LCO number 3490, House "A" offered by Representatives Mushinsky and Staples.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

At this time, I seek permission to withdraw House "A".

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Without objection, so ordered.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

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Thank you. The Clerk has another amendment, LCO 3862.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Belden.

REP. BELDEN: (113TH)

Madam Speaker, a parliamentary inquiry.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. BELDEN: (113TH)

The previous amendment was not authored by the individual who brought it out. It was -- excuse me, I'm sorry. I had the wrong information. I'm sorry.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Mushinsky, please proceed.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Clerk has an amendment, LCO 3862. If the Clerk would please call and may I summarize?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Will the Clerk please call LCO 3862, designated House "B".

CLERK:

LCO number 3862, House "B" offered by Representative Mushinsky, et al.

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DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move adoption and I will summarize this amendment, which replaces the file.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

The question before us is on adoption. Please continue.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Thank you. The amendment requires each local and regional board of education to develop a policy for use on and after October 1, 2002 to address the problem of bullying in schools.

This policy shall enable students to anonymously report acts of bullying; enable parents and guardians to file written reports of suspected bullying; and require teachers and staff who witness acts of bullying or receive students reports to notify school administrators; require the administrators to investigate any written reports, those filed by parents and guardians; and review any anonymous reports.

They must include an intervention strategy for the school's staff to deal with bullying; provide for adding language regarding bullying to their student codes of conduct; require a notification to the parents and

guardians of students who committed verified acts of bullying and parents and guardians of students who were the victims of bullying; and this notice shall include the school's response and any consequences that may result from further bullying.

And finally, require each school to maintain a list of the total number of verified acts of bullying and to make this list available to the general public.

The amendment also defines bullying, for purposes of this section.

I want to thank everyone who helped craft this language, which has been through many revisions, including Representative Heagney, Senator Gaffey, Mark Stapleton, Richard Tulisano, and the help for bullied children advocacy group who many of you met outside the Hall of the House tonight with their kids.

I also appreciate the help of the Governor's Prevention Partnership and the Commission on Children and the Select Committee on Children who worked hard to try to help these children.

I urge your support for this amendment, which becomes the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Would you care to remark further on the amendment before us?

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Representative Prelli of the 63rd.

Representative Sawyer of the 55th.

REP. SAWYER: (55TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. If I may, a question to Representative Mushinsky.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Please proceed.

REP. SAWYER: (55TH)

Representative Mushinsky, may I ask in line 4, where you came up with the date October 1, 2002? And your thoughts on that, please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. That was to give a little time for the boards to address the existence in their schools and have time to put it into their policy manual.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER: (55TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. In the case of many boards of educations within small towns, often times they do not meet on a monthly basis in the summertime. Sometimes there is a whole month in which they would not

meet.

My concern is, if this bill does not take effect until July 1, they do not meet, say in the month of August, suddenly it is September. It is on their plate. They have not had time to review what the policies are amongst their buildings, bring all their administrators together, and often times we have a change of administrators or top personnel within the school system at the beginning of September.

I think one of the problems we have is the short notice that it be required by October 1, 2002, which is this year.

I do have an amendment, though it is not ready, Madam Speaker, to change that date to February, 2003, just to give the schools time to review their policy, to work with their existing administrators plus their new folks to be able to put this together. And through you, Madam Speaker, if the amendment does come back within a timely manner, I would be calling that later.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, Madam.

Would you care to remark further?

Representative Powers of the 151st.

REP. POWERS: (151ST)

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Thank you, Madam Speaker. And through you to the proponent of the amendment. Representative Mushinsky, I'd like to just kind of walk through the conversation we had a couple of days ago for legislative intent.

Through you, Madam Speaker. On line 6, we are establishing a "shall", which we know is non-negotiable. And small (1) to enable students to anonymously report.

Through you, Madam Speaker. Despite what the words say, for legislative intent, are we also allowing students to report not anonymously to a trusted teacher or adult in the school?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. Yes, that's also allowed. I did check this question with Legislative Research and the drafting attorneys and enabling students to anonymously report does not mean that's the only way they can report. It just gives them that option of leaving their name off the report.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

If you would give me one moment. The members are having trouble hearing one another. If the Chamber could please move the conversations outside of the House, we would appreciate it.

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Please continue.

REP. POWERS: (151ST)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. And I thank the lady for her answer.

I am glad that LCO believes that. Unfortunately, what we have to deal with is what the words actually say and when they are silent, we cannot make an assumption, which is why I am asking - why I asked the question. I did for legislative intent so that we are allowing children to report other than anonymously to a trusted adult or teacher about a bullying incident and I think that is extremely important.

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, Madam.

Representative Tercyak of the 26th.

REP. TERCYAK: (26TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Supporting this amendment will show children, parents, other adults and educators that this Legislature does not take lightly acts of bullying experienced by our children and youth. Bullying is hurtful. Whether constant taunting, name calling, or of a physical nature.

It must stop. The indignity of bullying should not be tolerated not only in our schools, but in activities

or situations related to the school.

This includes the recess, the school grounds, buses, on buses, bus stops and various school activities. Children should feel comfortable about attending school, free of any act of bullying. It must stop.

I ask for support of this unfortunately necessary amendment.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative San Angelo of the 131st.

REP. SAN ANGELO: (131ST)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. If I could, a question or two of the proponent of the amendment, please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. SAN ANGELO: (131ST)

Representative Mushinsky, I'm trying to understand, specifically I'm trying to look at line 18, number 8. Require each school to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in such school and make list available for public inspection.

Would that be the names of the students who committed the act or is it - there would be a list saying, well, if there were 30 acts of bullying in the

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school, and that would be the public would come in and say yes, there was 30 acts of bullying in this school.

Explain to me what you were trying to get at there, if you would, please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. Yes, that is correct. Your interpretation is correct. We are looking for verified acts, a count, not the names of the parties involved. And the reason for that is, we want the parents to be able to check on the progress in that school system. If that school has a very high number of verified acts in comparison to other schools in that area, we want parents to know that so they can work on bringing bullying prevention into that school and reduce that rate so it's more in line with a typical school in that area.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative San Angelo.

REP. SAN ANGELO: (131ST)

So through you, Madam Speaker, in no way will this bill allow the names of any individual student who might have been committing what is described as bullying in this law from being out there made available to any

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person upon public inspection?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. That is correct. We are looking for trends and we are looking for schools where the administration has not done a good job of bringing about an anti-bullying policy that pervades the school.

We're looking for schools like that and the way you can tell is if their acts of bullying are greatly above a typical school. Then there's a problem there and the school has to address it.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative San Angelo.

REP. SAN ANGELO: (131ST)

Through you, Madam Speaker. What would happen if an administrator, for some reason, either an administrator or a teacher or some person within the school system failed to notify administrators that an act of bullying had occurred? Would there be some punishment to that teacher for not making this notification? What would be - what would force a teacher to, I guess, require or I guess notify an administrator of this process?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

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DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. We deliberately did not put a new penalty in here. There are generic penalties in the statutes. We don't think we need them at this time. We're going to try this without a specific new penalty and if we need it, we can always revisit it later.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative San Angelo.

REP. SAN ANGELO: (131ST)

Okay. Through you, Madam Speaker. If we're going to require that the parents or guardians of a student who commits one of these acts is notified that the child has committed this, is there a punishment for the child who now commits an act of bullying within the school system?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. The question was, is there now a punishment for the bully? Okay.

Through you, Madam Speaker. That will be in the

school policy. The school will have to develop a policy for what happens to the bully, especially after repeat offenses and the notification is to protect the victim and to notify the parents of the victim that some action will be taken to protect the victim from future bullying.

One of the obvious complaints that came to our committee, as this bill was being written, is that in some schools the parents complaints just fall into this black hole somewhere and are never recorded, are never acted upon and one particular case there were 40 incidents against one student, but only 20 records of it in the school system.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative San Angelo.

REP. SAN ANGELO: (131ST)

Thank you. Through you, Madam Speaker. Looking at the definition of "bullying", it says that the act has to be committed against the same student over time. Does that mean that a particular student can bully an individual once and then move onto someone else and harass somebody else and keep on going and that would not be considered bullying because it only happened once against a particular student? And I'm referring

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specifically to lines 27 and 28 which says, "which acts are repeated against the same student over time."

So I guess the question is, can you bully different students and not fall under this or do you have to -- I guess you have to continuously harass one particular student for it to be considered bullying?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. Or you could be a bully that harasses five different students repeatedly over time.

But what we're trying to do here is separate out the single incident, a single fist fight between two kids versus a pattern, a repeated pattern of intimidating or humiliating or punishing the same student over and over again, which is a much more serious matter for the victim.

REP. SAN ANGELO: (131ST)

Through you, Madam Speaker. It's my understanding that students who bully other students, then there would be a list maintained by how many times that this occurred. How many times would it have to occur against one student for it to actually become an act of

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bullying? In other words, if you're going to have a list that says this school, in the last five months, has had 40 acts of bullying, but an act of bullying is only, as I read this definition, only occurs if you repeatedly attack the same student. So how does that work in terms of the list of acts of bullying?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. Once it becomes a repetition. For example, in this case in the magnet school in Branford, it was the same kid going to the nurse's office over and over again and generally the same kid sent him to the nurse's office. So if the school continued to do nothing for this child, after the first couple of times, then that would be a pattern of abuse against that same child.

Nowhere in Connecticut should there be 40 instances of abuse against the same kid. That's just unacceptable to the Kids Committee and I hope it's unacceptable to this Chamber.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative San Angelo.

REP. SAN ANGELO: (131ST)

Thank you. And I agree with you. I guess I'm

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trying to understand how this works.

So if one student, in some way, harassed another student, that would not qualify on the list of bullying in terms of the school has a list of bullying that's open for public inspection. If that only happened one time to one student, that wouldn't be on the list.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Correct.

REP. SAN ANGELO: (131ST)

In order to make that list, it would have to be some number of repetition against the same student, but we don't know - I guess the administrator would have to decide at what point he thought it was bullying or what point he didn't think it was bullying to even add it to the list of incidents that happened within the school. I guess that's what this is trying to say.

Is that correct? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Yes. Through you, Madam Speaker. We're trying to take out the one time incident where one kids loses his temper, slugs the other kid, harasses the other kid, but it only happens once. We're trying to break the pattern of intimidation or ridicule of the same student. And

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that's really the type of student that is driven to the point of desperation and that's why we have had some tragedies and near tragedies in a couple of these cases.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative San Angelo.

REP. SAN ANGELO: (131ST)

Through you, Madam Speaker. That's the end of my questions. I guess my concern is this. Is it that list of bullying that's going to be open to public inspection - I'm not sure what that's going to mean because an individual incident might happen from individual students fifty times, but that would not be counted. It only counts after there's repetition on one particular individual student and I'm not sure at what point an administrator would want to make a school look bad by adding this name to a list of bullying incidents.

I think it leaves the administrator up there to sort of pick and choose when he's going to list somebody as a bully. So I'm not sure how that list will actually work. I'm concerned that, in fact, that list won't exist because it would have to be repetitive incidents to even get the administrator to add it to that list.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. I would say that after the second time, it becomes repetition. If there's one

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student being harassed fifty times, then 48 of those ought to be counted.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative San Angelo.

REP. SAN ANGELO: (131ST)

So then for purposes of legislative intent, if a particular student is harassed twice by the same person, then under your intention, they would then make the open public inspection list that the school system would have to provide. Is that accurate?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. We describe it as repeated against the same student over time. When it happens twice, it's been repeated. To be on the safe side, if I were an administrator, I would count it after the second time, but it doesn't specify the second time. It just says acts repeated against the same student.

What we're trying to break here is this chronic long term harassment of the same student that goes on and I've talked to the parents, goes on weeks, months, an entire school year and no adult will step forward and

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put a stop to it. That's what we're trying to break, that type of pattern.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative San Angelo.

REP. SAN ANGELO: (131ST)

Okay. And I don't have any other questions, Madam Speaker. I guess my concern is just this. Is that I can't imagine an administrator that would make this list of students in a school that are doing bullying, if given the option that they could decide when that actually occurs and how many times that has to be repeated before it actually occurs.

So I'd be amazed that the administrator that would want to have that sort of in the record of his school system, this list of bullying activities and what this legislation does is sort of give them an out and say, well, it has to happen repeatedly to the same student over some period of time. I'm not sure exactly what that means and I would have some concern that that notification process really won't work as effectively as I think that the proponents of this bill are trying to encourage.

So, I'm going to support it, but I think the language is a little bit weak in terms of what it's trying to do.

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Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Belden of the 113th.

REP. BELDEN: (113TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, first let me indicate that I do plan to support this. It's a start on an issue which we probably need to address. But if I may, through you, to the proponent.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Please proceed.

REP. BELDEN: (113TH)

Can you tell me why we're essentially indicating that we're going to have probably 150 or 160 separate policies out there, rather than going with a bill where the State of Connecticut mandates the process, the forms, the criteria, that all the school boards would use so that you would have a uniform data base for what's going on?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. This is an effort to listen to the superintendents to some extent, to the

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boards of ed to some extent. I think they wanted a little discretion. They actually probably would prefer there be no bill at all, but one thing they were interested in was a common definition, but still put the information in their own policy.

So that's what we did. We wrote one common definition. The policy itself, which some schools may have a policy on bullying, some may not, they wish to keep the policy they have and the penalties that they have for bullying. The other schools maybe writing it from scratch and may come up with something different.

So the only commonality in here is how reporting is done and the definition of what we mean by bullying.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Belden.

REP. BELDEN: (113TH)

Yes. Thank you. I think we're mandating - I think this is a state mandate, by the way, whether we like it or not. And I think it requires eight specific actions that we shall require each board of education to, in fact, do, however they want to interpret that.

A couple of questions for legislative intent. Can I assume, through you, Madam Speaker, that we are dealing with public education, grades K-12 only?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. Yes, we're talking about local and regional boards of education. So that would be public.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Belden.

REP. BELDEN: (113TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. This would not do with school district number one, the state prisons, or private schools or the state vo-tech schools?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. Each local and regional board of education. So if they're included in that, in the statutes, they would. If they're not, they're not.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Belden.

REP. BELDEN: (113TH)

Thank you. Okay, so we're only going to deal with K-12 public schools and no others. That's the way I read that.

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Through you, Madam Speaker. Let me ask another question that I asked before, but it was on a different proposal.

On line 27 it talks about school sponsored activity. Can we assume that to mean that any youngster riding on a school bus would fall under that category for the purposes of reporting bullying?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. It is our committee's intent to include school bus rides. In fact, some of the worse cases of bullying, we heard, occur on the school buses out of sight of the teachers and staff. So we definitely wish to include them as school sponsored activities.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Belden.

REP. BELDEN: (113TH)

Thank you. And one last question in jest, for fun.

I would like Mary to prepare, after this, if you could tell me who did prepare the fiscal note because I want to go to that analyst whenever I have an amendment that says there's no municipal cost to implementing this.

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Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Dandrow of the 30th.

REP. DANDROW: (30TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I also phrase a question? One of my questions has been answered by Representative Belden concerning the school bus. But I do have another question, if I may frame that to Representative Mushinsky.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Please proceed.

REP. DANDROW: (30TH)

Representative Mushinsky, we all heard so many of the stories concerning this bullying and the trauma that it really effected so many children. But my concern - one of my concerns is that if we are going to be trying to develop a pattern and a trend of behaviors or the causes or the effects of these behaviors, is there any way that some sort of compiling of reports should be sent to the State Department so that they could assist the local boards in analyzing the data that's coming to them?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

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REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. As you know, Ann, because you're on the Children's Committee, that was in our original language. And it was deleted at one of the stops along the way. So although personally I would like to keep it in there, it was deleted by another committee and so now the data gathering will only happen at the local level. It will be up to the parents and maybe the local reporters to go in and occasionally check on it to see how the school is doing.

Then there is information available from the State Department of Education and from the Commission on Children through a grant program that this Legislature established last year to teach staff and students anti-bullying strategies that are taught throughout the school. And some of these schools who never applied for a grant, probably need to apply.

One of the things the data will show us is does your school have a problem? And if so, why don't you folks apply? Get some help.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Dandrow.

REP. DANDROW: (30TH)

Yes. Thank you, Representative Mushinsky. One of the curriculum things that goes on through the State

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Department of Education that is offered on a local basis is called "current legislation" that has been passed and the effect of it and the knowledge of it and perhaps that's going to be a gathering point at some point if we could make sure that the Commissioner does implement this piece of legislation that hopefully will be passed and from that point on, perhaps we could begin to gather some of the reports because without being able to get this data and having to go around to all the local boards, I don't think we're going to be able to truly do the intent of what we wanted, which was to come up with a pattern of behavior that causes so much harm to so many children in the bullying process.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, Madam.

Representative Heagney of the 16th.

REP. HEAGNEY: (16TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the bill, as being amended and proposed.

I think what is very important about the bill is the way we define and the questions have been very articulate in setting forth our definition of bullying, that it is not an isolated incident, it is not a single event, that it is a series of events by one child

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against another or a group of children against another over time, meaning not two things within a short period of time, but over a period of time.

This clearly identifies the intent and pattern of conduct that is being conducted by one child or a group of children against another. And this is the area of bullying that I think we need to focus on and eliminate from our schools and I'm sure that this legislation will move our boards of education towards good regulation of this area.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Truglia of the 145th.

REP. TRUGLIA: (145TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this amendment.

When we ignore or try to minimize bullying behavior, we are, in fact, doing great harm to both the bully and the target of the bullying.

Children who are bullies in their early years often have criminal records by the time they're in their 30's.

The bully, if not helped, often ends up a school drop out and in jail.

We need to help these youngsters learn values that

curtail bullying behavior. Just as devastating as the impact on the bullied children, these victimized children typically become depressed, isolated, and fearful of school.

Over time, they often take their anger out on themselves, on others or both.

During our public hearings, many parents came forward and spoke of the devastation caused by bullying of their children. One parent talked about her child not attending school for one month because of fear.

We know that children are capable of aggression and even criminal behavior. In fact, very young children do commit crimes. Almost 11% of the 25,632 youngsters arrested in Connecticut were twelve years old or younger with one in five charged with assault.

It is no surprise that parents are deeply concerned. A recent Yankolovich poll included in our state's social health index, showed the 55% worry about their child picking up attitudes or behaviors that go against their values. Forty-five percent worry about their child being safe in school. Forty-one percent worry about students bullying other students.

Responsibility to create a sound curriculum for elementary and middle schools and helping schools create positive and respectful climates by teaching caring,

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compassion, cooperation, tolerance and diversity, positive conflict resolutions, and how to express feelings in a positive way, is crucial.

Many of us are convinced that if children are not supported with environments that teach respect, caring and communication, these tragic and violent manifestations of bullying and the consequences of victimization will continue to be part of our national scene.

Last year we, in the Legislature, unanimously supported passage of the Safe Learning Act which offers grant dollars to school districts to help school districts develop whole school models to deal with bullying and violence in schools.

The Competitive Grant Program will provide resources to schools to implement research based solutions that include schoolwide interventions, classroom level interventions, and individual and community interventions. To date, over 16 school districts have received grant monies and many more have applied.

If we are serious about ensuring a safe, nurturing school environment for every child, it is critical to provide funding to local districts for training and ongoing evaluation of what really works.

I see the bill before us as a companion to the Safe Learning Act. Unfortunately, in this tight budget year, no new funds have been allocated to expand the program, which received a matching grant from a private donor of over \$500,000 last year. Hopefully, we can encourage more assistance from the private sector to expand the program.

The bill before us encourages school districts to move away from zero tolerance policies that just suspend or expel students. It calls for a rethinking and a deeper understanding of the layers of relationships among students and among students with staff and parents.

With your support, schools will embrace the whole school model of safety envisioned in this bill and significantly improve outcomes for our children.

Please support this important amendment.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, Madam.

Representative Newton of the 124th.

REP. NEWTON: (124TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just a question to the proponent of the amendment.

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Please proceed, sir.

REP. NEWTON: (124TH)

And I had some of these concerns last time that we spoke.

It's on the compiling of the list. Once the school compiles the list of who they bullies are, parents can go in and take a look. What do we do with the list once the school compiles this list? Does it just stay in the school? Do we send it to the superintendent or the board of education so they're aware?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. This notification has changed since the original bill. And now the school is maintaining the list of the number of verified acts of bullying and makes it available to the public. So that is kept at the school level. The earlier version of the bill was sent to Hartford. That will not be true in this version of the bill. It will be kept at the local level and I encourage and we hope that parents will come in and see how their school is doing.

Ideally, a number of bullying incidents should go down each year because action should be taken.

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Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Newton.

REP. NEWTON: (124TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I raise that concern. I'm going to support the bill because I think it's a step in the right direction. But most of our school districts have boards of education, they have superintendents. To keep a list in a school so that only parents can look at, I think something should have been done after the school compiles the list, they should send it to the superintendent, to the board of education so that they could make sure that they monitor so they get the training and all the great things they need because what will happen is this.

In most of our school systems we try not to report bad things. And so I don't know many principals that would want the school districts that they live in to know we've got ten bullies here. So if we're real serious about doing something with bullying, other than providing training and going through that, I think we should have went a step further and sent it to the superintendent or the board of education that has jurisdiction over that school district to make sure that those numbers go down. And that somebody will be

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watching them, other than the parents, to make sure that schools get better and I would assume that's why this bill is here to make your school get better so that we don't have bullying.

And so, although I'm going to support it, I thought when they did the new amendment, we would have sent that report somewhere other than sitting in a file cabinet or posted up on a bulletin board or whatever they do to show who the bullies are in that school. The superintendent might not even know.

So, my question, through you, Madam Speaker, when does the board of education or the superintendent ever get to view this list?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. Any member of the public can view the list and my hope is that the local news folks will be interested in looking at it once a year. I hope the local PTO, PTA will be interested in looking at it. And the parents who have received notifications, I hope they'll be interested in looking at it. The folks who were here tonight, some of whom reported that notices were missing, in the records that

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they had been notified, but they never actually were notified.

Folks like that are angry enough that they will go in and check and I'm going to rely on them as our first defense to check on the list and we'll take it from there. This legislation is like they say about the sausage making. This legislation has had many different versions. Some versions stronger than others. This is the version that's before us today that I think we get to pass out of here. So, we'll go with this for today.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Newton.

REP. NEWTON: (124TH)

As I said, Madam Speaker, I'm going to support this because I think it's a step in the right direction. But unless the boards of education and your superintendents of your schools have any idea or know that bullying is going on in the school, I think a report or something should be sent to the superintendent so that way she could monitor or he could monitor to make sure that those numbers go down.

So, I'm hoping that the proponent of this amendment might be able to get an amendment in the Senate to address those concerns.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Powers of the 151st. I'm sorry.

Representative Ken Green of the 1st.

REP. GREEN: (1ST)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I rise actually in support of this amendment. And I've heard some good comments, particularly by Representative Truglia, who, I think, really made some very good points.

Just a couple of questions to the proponent of the amendment and then maybe a quick comment.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. GREEN: (1ST)

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky, please prepare yourself.

Please proceed.

REP. GREEN: (1ST)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Representative Mushinsky, Representative Belden had asked about vocational technical schools and things like the unified school district and the Department of Correction. Was it your response that those school systems are not local boards

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of education or they were local boards of education?

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. I said that if they were considered local and regional boards of education, then they would be. If they're not, then they're not.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Green:

REP. GREEN: (1ST)

Thank you. Another question, just for some clarification.

When you talked about events at school or school sponsored events, and someone mentioned about transportation to and from school, would to and from school also include whether or not the students were walking to and from school and would that be a school sponsored event?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. I would say not unless they're walking to a park to do a study there and it's a school sponsored group walk to somewhere. In that case, that would be a school sponsored activity. An individual coming from their home on foot to the school, I would not consider that a school sponsored activity.

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However, if a student is arriving by school bus and the school bus is hired by the board of education, then that would be a school sponsored activity, that ride on the school bus.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Green.

REP. GREEN: (1ST)

Thank you. A couple of clarifications on some of the language in the amendment.

On line 7, you say that this policy should enable the parents or the guardians of the students to file written reports. Who should they file the written reports to or should that be left up to the schools to decide that?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. This is written reports to the school. I have also been recommending they sign a copy to the superintendent when I've met with the parents. They really should cover their bases by sending to both places, but the bill is referring to a written report to the school.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Green.

REP. GREEN: (1ST).

Thank you, Madam Speaker. The third section, lines 8 and 9, where you require teachers and other school staff who witness acts of bullying to notify the school administrators and you talk about requiring school administrators to investigate any reports.

If the policy requires that the parents of the bullies attend a meeting at the school, if that's part of the policy, if your child has been accused, you need to come in for a report and the parent does not attend this meeting to address a verified report, is there any consequence for the parent for not attending a meeting that's part of the policy?

For example, your child has been reported three times. You're now required to attend a meeting. The parent does not attend that meeting. Are there any consequences for the parent for not following through on the policy of the school?

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. This amendment does not address that level of detail. That will be in the student policy.

What we are trying to address here, though, is how the parent reports, how the student reports, how the

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teachers report, and making clear that the parent of both the victim and the bully is notified. The school has to notify that parent so they know what the next steps will be and what actions are going to be taken to protect that victim from further abuse.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Green.

REP. GREEN: (1ST)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I stated, I support this amendment. I think that it really is a good first step and I think that we have to try to make the schools a little safer for the students.

But I think that part of what we have to do and Representative Truglia talked about character and how character counts. Also talked about continued that the bullying for children. And so some of the things that happen to them after they become young adults and adults until getting involved in the criminal justice systems and some other issues that happen through repeated acts of bullying while you're young.

Unfortunately, I think that as adults, this is really one of the important things that we have to do. Part of the greatest, I think, weapons against bullying is to make sure that we increase the confidence of young

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people, we increase the self esteem of young people to make sure that they don't feel like they have to disrespect others. And I think part of the way we do that as adults is we have to model the kind of behaviors that we want children to follow. And unfortunately, I think, in our society we have a lot of adults that bully.

A lot of adults that bully their children, a lot of adults that bully each other and as a school social worker, believe me, I run across a couple of instances where children bully their parents, children bully adults and I think that that's probably going to be another issue we're going to have to address at some time.

But I think that as we take this first step to really say that these kinds of acts of intimidation, ridicule, harassment, really should not be tolerated by children or adults and I think we, as adults, really need to model. That as we ask children to not do that, let's make sure that we do that by providing the right kind of model before them.

So, I support this bill. I think there are some issues that we have to address in the bill. There are some things that we have to work on, but I think that in working with the schools, and not having the schools and

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the teachers and the school personnel be here, the person that has to do something or the lack of not doing something, makes them the ones that are the problems. This is not a responsibility that we just have to give to teachers. This is not a responsibility we just have to give to schools and say because you did not do anything, you're at the wrong and now we're going to blame the teacher for not reacting, for the teacher not saying anything. We really have to do this in a balanced way.

I appreciate Representative Mushinsky where she really wants us to be aware of this issue. It is not a punitive kind of thing. I would hope that parents don't target out teachers, don't target school systems to say that we have all these acts of bullying, the teachers or the administrators are not doing their job. This is not what the intent of this bill is. The intent of this bill is to provide safe environments for our young people. It is not to look for blame on anybody's part. It is to come up with policies. It is to come up with some ideas to make sure that we can have kids not only respect themselves, but respect others.

So let's not look at this as what a school or a teacher did not do. Let's look at this as a partnership where we're trying to reduce acts of disrespect and acts

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of bullying and that's the way I would like for us to look at this and not take this and see this as a way that we can make this punitive. We're talking about change in style, change in behaviors and let's see it in that manner.

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Martinez of the 128th.

REP. MARTINEZ: (128TH)

Thank you. I rise to express my gratitude for the legislators and the staff people that worked on this bill. I realize that this is something that is going to be another tool for the schools, for the superintendents, the board of education, and the administrators.

It is sad that we cannot put any money behind this bill because bullying doesn't happen overnight. It starts before the child shows the bullying that he will do to another child and in order for us to help our children, I know that there are many programs outside that we could buy for them. It requires some extra staff to work with the children and like Representative Green said, many times to work with the parents too because this is a learning process that takes time and it takes

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money.

I worry about how we are going to disseminate this information to the parents and that would be my question to the proponent of this bill. How are the parents going to know that we're bringing this bill and we're going to pass it through the House and send it to the different schools?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. Just through the news accounts of the legislation and if they are a member of a parent/teacher group. Perhaps they're in a family resource center or some organized group that helps parents do a good job with their students. But there won't be individual notices in this legislation.

However, the policy document, as far as I understand, is sent home with every student and every school and because this will be part of the policy document, if the parents actually go through their kid's backpack and find that policy document, they will at least see it in there.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Martinez.

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REP. MARTINEZ: (128TH)

The board of education, the Commissioner here, the Commissioner of Education, is he going to be involved when we pass this bill? Who is going to handle this from here to the schools? Whose going to be the middle person?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. The State Department of Education is not directly involved in this legislation. However, the State Department does have available information on bullying intervention programs and as you heard from Representative Truglia, there is also a Safe Learning Grant Program. The monies are probably accounted for by now, but that information also went out from the State Department of Education to the school systems.

So there's no direct notification to each parent from the State Department of Education. They will learn about it at the local level through their policy manuals that come home with their kids and I know it's hard to find a policy manual amongst all the notebooks, old lunches and whatever else might be in that backpack, but it will be in there somewhere. And the more active

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parents, I hope, will help educate the other parents in their school to take advantage of this.

In our area, the parents are training other parents already in south central Connecticut. The advocacy group is already training other parents on how to file complaints and how to put everything in duplicate and keep a copy at home. So, some of this will be done, one parent helping another.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Martinez.

REP. MARTINEZ: (128TH)

I will feel more comfortable if there's a way that we could direct or request somehow that this information should be given to every parent that has - someone mentioned that some of the schools could be identified, at least to those schools, that we let the parents know this kind of legislation. And also like in Bridgeport we do have parents that do not speak the English language. So I also would like for the Department of Education to find a way in which that could be communicated to the superintendent and the board of education to notify the parents on this legislation that we're putting here tonight.

Thank you.

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DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, Madam.

Representative Gibbons of the 150th.

REP. GIBBONS: (150TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. If I may, please, a comment on the amendment and then through you, Madam Speaker, a question to Representative Mushinsky.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Please proceed, Madam.

REP. GIBBONS: (150TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. As a past board of education chairman, we were only too well aware of different mandates that came down from the State as to requiring our district as to what to do. And the only thing that was possibly more scary to a board of education than a state mandate was one that came from the legislator that was a little bit confusing and wasn't totally thought out.

And I think the debate tonight has underlined some of the problems that this amendment has.

Given the many violent acts that have taken place in our schools throughout the country in recent years, I will support this because I do think that some of those violent acts were either caused by bullies or people who had been bullied as youngsters. And somehow we've got to

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break that cycle and do something about this.

But I am concerned with how this bill is going to be administered. I'm concerned about the time frame. I hope that Representative Sawyer gets her amendment out because I think it's going to be very difficult for school boards to act by October 1st.

And through you, please, if I may frame a question to Representative Mushinsky.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Please frame your question, Madam.

REP. GIBBONS: (150TH)

Thank you, Madam Chairman. Representative Mushinsky, did the State Board of Education weigh in on this amendment or did you speak with them and did they have anything to say, please?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. The State Board of Education did not weigh in. The State Department of Education certainly did and some of the versions of the bill were unacceptable to them, so we have been working with them.

REP. GIBBONS: (150TH)

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Thank you. Through you, Madam Speaker. Do you see the State Board of Education, the State Department of Education coming in in a way that they're going to collect this data and be able to weigh in some of the policies that are going to come back from the different school boards?

I think given the fact that this amendment is so loosely worded, we are going to end up with 164 different policies, some of which maybe acceptable and some of which may not, some of which may really help solve the problem, and some of which may not.

How do you perceive this going into the future, please?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. The State Department of Education did not wish a centralized system. They did not wish it. So, we honored their wish by taking that out.

The earlier version of the bill did actually have a more centralized system to try to create policies that were similar among towns, but that was deleted about two months ago in the life of this bill. I think it makes

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more sense, personally, but their wish was to have the local - the data gathering done locally.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Gibbons.

REP. GIBBONS: (150TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I can appreciate the wish of the State Department of Education not to get involved in one more policy making, but I do think that we are going to have to look at this or they're going to have to look at it in the future.

In the meantime, I think it does have some underlying good qualities and I hope that we go forward with it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, Madam.

Representative Chapin of the 67th.

REP. CHAPIN: (67TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I apologize to Representative Mushinsky to get her up again, but I do have a couple of questions for her, through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Please proceed, sir.

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REP. CHAPIN: (67TH)

In line 6, where it says, "to enable students to anonymously report acts". Is it my understanding that the student can actually, for instance, submit something in writing without signing their name?

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. Yes, that is certainly allowed.

We struggled with this anonymous section of the bill and finally came up with a two tiered system. The students can do anonymous reporting. The adults have to do something in writing. And the reason is that - and the parents really convinced us of this, that a little child is going to be too intimidated in many cases to put their name on, especially if they're a witness to someone else bullying a third person.

If they are a witness - and we want to encourage the witnesses to come and protect the vulnerable and get involved. So, it was very important to the parents that the students, at least be able to anonymously report. How it would probably work in real life is the school would set up a box for the students to tip toe up and slip a note in there that they know this is happening in the locker room. It's every Thursday. It's around 2:00 o'clock. Kids gang up on this one boy. And that will

trigger some activity in the administration office.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Chapin.

REP. CHAPIN: (67TH)

Thank you. And through you, Madam Speaker. In line 24, for purposes of this section, bullying means any overt acts. My interpretation of overt is out in the open or noticeable. Would you agree that perhaps bullying could be a covert act as well, and if so, why is it not addressed in such a manner?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. What we're trying to say is it's an outward act by a student and we're trying to use the word "act" to include by physical and verbal because sometimes the damage is very severe to the student, but it's done in a way of verbal humiliation rather than an actual pounding, but that's just as damaging. So we wanted to include both types and overt means that it's open, aggressively aimed at the other student.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

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Representative Chapin.

REP. CHAPIN: (67TH)

Thank you. And through you, Madam Speaker. So in a case where one student, being the student that's being bullied and the bully maybe, for instance, in the bathroom where there are no witnesses and perhaps there's no bodily harm. Would you consider that an overt act?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. Yes, it certainly is. If one student is taking an aggressive open act toward the other student, whether it be verbal or physical, and it is repetitive, then we are intending to include.

Now, we're not including simple teasing where I tease you one week and then the next week you come in and you make fun of my clothes and you tease me and the third week I come in and I make fun of your sports team. This is not the level we're talking about. We're talking about the intent to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate. So the other person is wounded and is damaged and feels pain from this chronic attack on them.

So the overt act is by the student, in your case,

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the overt act would be the action by the student against that same victim time after time in the restroom. And you're right, that's a lot of times where it happens.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Chapin.

REP. CHAPIN: (67TH)

I thank the lady for her answers.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Farr of the 19th.

REP. FARR: (19TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Very briefly. I want to make a couple of comments on this because I'm afraid some people listening to this or some members of the Chamber may get the wrong impression about what we ought to be doing about bullying:

There was a presentation, there have been some comments made about how we have to do research. The research has been done. There was a presentation in the Legislative Office Building, I believe, a year and one-half or two years ago by a researcher in Norway who spent extensive time researching this issue. What did he find out? The number one myth is that somehow

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bullies have low self esteem, that you have to raise their self esteem.

The fact of the matter is quite the contrary. Bullies don't have low esteem. People who commit aggressive behavior tend to be narcissistic. They don't think that they're inferior, they think they're superior.

Number two, that there's a concept out there, well, just keep sensitivity and that will work. There's been no indication that ever has an impact.

Number three, what does work? What does work is teaching sanctions. When they put in place programs where they told kids if you want to be a bully, if you're going to take certain actions, there are going to be consequences. If every time you take an action that's not acceptable, there's a consequence, the child learns that. That's an important part of the education of that child. If we can teach kids that there are consequences to their actions, then that's a huge benefit to those children.

But that's what works. We also have to create a climate where bullying is not acceptable. So there's also peer pressure not to do bullying. Those things work.

If this bill is all about funding or encouraging

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schools to go out and raise self esteem to bullies or teach them to be sensitive, then frankly that's a waste of time. That isn't going to work. What we ought to do are those things that we know do work.

The strength of this bill, quite frankly, is it doesn't define what the solution is. It simply defines a system that we're going to go out and ask them to define the problem, measure the problem, and see what works. I think those schools that go in the wrong direction will soon find that it's not working.

And hopefully, schools will pay some attention to the research that has been already been done, the research that says yes, there are things that schools can do quite effectively and implement those things.

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Stripp of the 135th.

REP. STRIPP: (135TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I'm very much in favor of this amendment, but I do have some issues and basically the issues rotate around the concept of false accusations and the traumatization that might create for somebody that is falsely accused as being a bully and if that information got out into the

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public, what it would do to that particular child.

So, through you, Madam Speaker, I have a question for the proponent of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. STRIPP: (135TH)

Okay. If I might ask, is there any appeal process to someone that is accused of and is allegedly a bully so that they can clear their name, if you will, or in fact, is this going to be in the record with them having no opportunity to clear their name, if you would?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Thank you. Through you, Madam Speaker. The acts have to be verified before notices are sent out. And before the incident is counted in the list. Remember, the names are not used in the list at all, but only the number of incidents..

Each school board will write this policy as they wish and they will decide how they verify acts of bullying, but schools have to do that now for any type of complaint against a student. They have to verify, have a -- interview witnesses, interview the two parties

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and make that decision.

So, everything will have to be verified according to this amendment and according to school policy.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Stripp.

REP. STRIPP: (135TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, one more question to the proponent.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. STRIPP: (135TH)

If, in fact, someone overtly or inadvertently releases the name of someone that's on the bully list, are there any sanctions for the person that might do that to protect the name of someone who has not had the right of appeal and who might be falsely accused of being a bully?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. No sanctions are listed in this amendment, but remember, this amendment does not provide for the identity of either the bully or the

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victim. All we are doing and I also want to clarify Representative Farr's remarks. All we are doing on the research is data collecting the numbers of incidents of verified bullying. That's all we are collecting in this legislation. And that research shows you if there is a problem in a particular school and whether the problem is getting worse or getting better.

So it's just numbers of verified incidents.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Stripp.

REP. STRIPP: (135TH)

I thank the gentle lady for her answers.

Madam Speaker, I'm quite concerned about this aspect of the bill and I would hope when we look at it and improve it next year, that we will take it into consideration and make sure that these names, which while in gross, will be given to the public, will be kept somewhere and therefore I'm very concerned that they may, in fact, be given out and traumatize, inadvertently, someone what is falsely accused of being a bully.

So I think it's something we should look at as we move forward and perhaps next year as we adjust the bill.

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Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Mikutel of the 45th.

REP. MIKUTEL: (45TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I originally had some reservations about this bill because some of my school officials had reservations about us placing more burdens on them. You know, we always hear that we're asking the schools to do more and more other than teach. In fact, they're becoming more and more social workers than they are teachers, it seems.

But I believe that this issue is too serious for us to put our heads in the sand and pretend the problem doesn't exist. Too many students in our State of Connecticut go to school in fear. School should not be a place of fear for our students. And I think this bill forces the school administrators to deal with the problem. I guess it's time to put their feet to the fire. I think the action is long overdue, myself.

And I believe that if we stop the bullies at an early age, we'll prevent a lot of future violence as these bullies, the history on them as they grow up to be violent adults and if we can stop them at an early age, maybe we can prevent future violence.

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I'd like to say that, again to reiterate what Representative Green said, that we're not seeking to blame anyone here. We're trying to create a safe environment for our students and they should have - they have a right to a safe environment.

And yes, it's not the best piece of legislation and I'm sure we're going to revisit it, but we have to begin somewhere to address this serious issue.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, Representative Mikutel.

Representative Tymniak of the 133rd.

REP. TYMNIAK: (133RD)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I also rise in favor of this amendment. As Representative Belden stated, this is just the beginning and the Select Committee on Children worked diligently listening to testimony and trying to craft a bill that would be acceptable.

I find that this bill is acceptable and once again, I state to my colleagues, this is a beginning and I urge to support this amendment.

Thank you very much.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, Madam.

Representative Diamantis of the 79th.

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REP. DIAMANTIS: (79TH)

I'm being overtly intimidated, Madam Speaker by Representative Dyson.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

He's never thought of as a bully, sir. Please proceed.

REP. DIAMANTIS: (79TH)

Thank you. I understand the intent and I understand why everybody, I think, is standing up and saying they're in support of this. I'd like to echo some of the comments of Representative Farr, who I think was on track with this.

But I do have some questions that I'd like to pose to the proponent, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. DIAMANTIS: (79TH)

Thank you. In line 6, where we're specifically talking about anonymous reports being made, bullying to teachers and school administrators. My concern with that is, in line 11, it requires school administrators to investigate any written reports filed pursuant to subsection 2.

Am I to assume, through you, Madam Speaker, that those anonymous reports will therefore not be required

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by school administrators to be investigated?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. This is compromised language. They will have to review any anonymous reports and investigate any written reports. The review is in line 12. This is a compromise because some of the superintendents said what if one person stuffs the complaint box with 100 anonymous reports? Are we supposed to investigate every single one of them even though they all seem to be written by the same person and they seem to be made up?

So, we set up two levels here. One for investigating and one for reviewing. And a responsible superintendent will review an anonymous report seriously if it appears to be genuine and does not appear to be case of stuffing the box.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Diamantis.

REP. DIAMANTIS: (79TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. Would a responsible superintendent investigate an act of bullying without

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this piece of legislation?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. We would hope so, but having met with now 70 or 80 angry parents, I can tell you that from their point of view, some of the superintendents do not take this seriously, do not respond to complaints, even lose complaints from the parents. So while some superintendents are taking the issue very seriously and protecting children, some are not doing as full a job as they could in the opinion of many parents. And I think our committee was convinced of that, as well.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Diamantis.

REP. DIAMANTIS: (79TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. Then I'd like to talk about the two systems, the compromise. And I do this for legislative intent because many of us who go back and report to our school boards will be asked questions on how they're to implement this and what the intent was because on reading this piece of legislation, it

certainly makes it unclear of what they are to do or can or cannot do.

And I say this with all due seriousness because it says very, very clearly that this bill requires school administrators to investigate any reports filed pursuant to subdivision 2 of this section and to review any anonymous reports. Which means, subdivision 2 enables the parents or guardians of students to file written reports or suspected bullying.

It is very clear that the school administrators are required to investigate only reports that are submitted in writing specifically by parents.

And school administrators are only required to review any reports that are made anonymously, I assume, by anyone else.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. That is correct. This is a compromise in an effort to avoid the school administration perhaps being required to investigate 120 different pieces of paper by the same handwriting.

These are the types of complaints we got from administrators and we're trying to walk that middle

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line.

Now, a person, an administrator reviewing an anonymous report, I hope, if they get one that says I've seen Joey carry a baseball bat in and every Thursday he bats William in the locker room and nobody seems to do anything about it, I would hope that an administrator seeing that anonymous report, will actually send a staff person to that locker room at that time and watch for that activity to prevent it.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Diamantis.

REP. DIAMANTIS: (79TH).

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Then, let's not talk about a locker room and to assume we'll deal with athletes, but let's talk about the bathroom. Somebody brought that example up and a young man is in a bathroom and the other, the bully walks into the bathroom, no witnesses. The bully says to the kid, which is not unusual, at least we've come across some cases like that, that basically says, does an act that is overtly intimidating, and says to the kid, "If you tell your parents or if you tell anybody else, I'm going to come back the next day and I'm going to beat you. I'm going to beat you."

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So the kid doesn't tell his parents because he's afraid. And hence his parents will not file a report because they won't know anything about it. So there's no written report.

Now, that child may or may not file an anonymous report.

Through you, Madam Speaker. What does this bill do to help that particular situation?

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. We are going to try to get the bystanders who are 70% of the school population, to help out here and they can file the anonymous reports. The teachers, the parents in many of these cases have picked up a problem with the child even if the child hasn't spoken of it. For example, the child maybe reluctant to go to school. The child may get a stomach ache every Monday morning. And the parent tries to figure out why this child is afflicted. And finally figures out there's something causing fear in the child.

At that point, the parent - and these are real cases - the parents would file a written report to the school saying they suspect their child's been bullied because the child has these physical ailments every Monday morning when they're facing the thought of going to school.

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So, we're going to do better than we're doing now, is the best I can give you. We may lose a few kids who there are no witnesses, the kid has not confided, the kid will not put the note in the box. But we're going to do better than we're doing now. It will be easier for a report to come in and there will be more responsibility for a school to respond to a worried parent.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Diamantis.

REP. DIAMANTIS: (79TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Very early on this debate, for legislative intent, I believe it was Representative San Angelo who talked about the verified acts and how they're going to be reported.

A question, through you, Madam Speaker is I heard and I quoted - I wrote in quotes here, that the issue was to illustrate the number of bullying acts that occurred in a particular school and determine whether or not it was a typical school or above the typical number of a school.

Through you, Madam Speaker. What are the typical number -- how do we determine the typical number of bullying acts that are within the norm at a particular

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school district?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. A PTA, for example, could review the numbers of all the schools in one town and they might notice that school "A" had five cases and school "B" had seven cases. School "C" had six cases and school "D" had 98 cases. Well, something's wrong in school "D". There's a climate of non-enforcement against bullies there. Something is wrong there in that school and that's really what we're using the data for, is to fair it out, the schools that have not taken the issue seriously.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Diamantis.

REP. DIAMANTIS: (79TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. Then the first step in even making this bill have some meaning to it, before we know what the typical numbers are, we're going to need to enlist the assistance of the PTA, for instance, to do a study on the number of acts that have occurred within that school area, school district to determine what the typical number of appropriate bullying acts are before we know if we're having too many or not enough?

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Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker: I don't think I would phrase it that way. What we're not trying to do is recommend a particular level of bullying. What we are saying is that it's clear that in some cities, based on talking to the parents, that some cities, some schools have a runaway climate where bullies do whatever they wish and no one pulls them back.

For example, one school, in the cafeteria, a student poured a carton of milk over the second student's head in full view of the teachers and no teacher stepped forward to say this was wrong.

In another school, that person who poured the milk would have been hauled away to the principal's office immediately.

So there was a climate of whatever goes in that particular school.

This is the kind of thing we're targeting the schools that need the most help first.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Diamantis.

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REP. DIAMANTIS: (79TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. Wouldn't most school systems expel a child like that from school for that type of behavior within their current school policies already?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Through you, Madam Speaker. As far as I know, this student is still in the school, who poured the milk on the second student's head.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Diamantis.

REP. DIAMANTIS: (79TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I certainly will not belabor this issue any further. Clearly, I think what we're trying to do here is to establish a mission for the school system in which we have determined, that as a result of 70 or 80 or 90 cases, that have received some sort of recognition, that we now need to reinforce to the local school districts that a problem exists.

I'm not so convinced that school districts throughout the State don't know that a problem exists, but clearly this mechanism for them to create a policy

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is not going to solve the problem.

The awareness issue, this debate probably would do more to solve this problem than a piece of legislation that I think still needs a great deal of clarification and a great deal of work to determine what a real process would be and what we expect of them to determine what, in fact, an investigatory process is. Does it lead to expulsion? We do that with our abuse and neglect rules now. We do that with our mandatory reporting rules now in abuse and neglect with respect to teachers and how they're supposed to report this.

What this does and I think it was best explained to me by another legislator, was merely put schools on notice that we feel they should be doing more with bullying and the minute that they to start making reports, will make them more accountable.

I would love to see the number of questions being proposed to Attorney Stapleton at the State Department of Education in answering questions of how they're going to put this policy together and what is the requirement for an investigation, how far do they investigate?

What is the manner and mechanism in which they will investigate?

And it appears that it is only school administrators to investigate. Not a designee, not

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someone else, school administrators.

I understand the mission. It's a good mission. But we should be doing that with a lot of other problems that exist in schools. The illegal drug activity that maybe goes on in a school, but we're not looking to do or making an awareness of that. There are tons of those kinds of problems in the bathrooms of our schools, as well as bullying.

There are a lot of other issues like those that need attention, as well as bullying and I would like to think that we had a process in place already for it, but I would agree that we need a broader system in handling these particular problems, not a feel good system like this.

And to suggest to the proponents that this very weak compromise for those individuals who came here with a true mission that they were concerned about their 70 or 80 or 90 students who have been bullied, that this compromise is going to help them, is, in my opinion, not on the same page with what their needs are.

And the fact that we compromised, review language with investigatory language and to suggest that we're hoping this thing will work and we're hoping that PTA's will get involved and we're hoping that other folks will do their job, well, we're already hoping that.

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We're already hoping, we're assuming that superintendents of school districts are doing their jobs and bullying shouldn't be going on now. It didn't need a law to suggest that you shouldn't be beating up kids, overtly humiliating them, overtly ridiculing them. It shouldn't be going on now. And this little piece of information, with no teeth to it, suggesting we really want you to look at it again, because we don't think you're doing a good enough job, so please look at it again, is what this bill is saying.

And this compromise is not a solution. I understand it creates an awareness to the superintendents that we're looking.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Would you care to remark further on the amendment before us? Would you care to remark further on the amendment before us?

If not, I'll try your minds.

All those in favor, please signify by saying aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

All those opposed, nay. The amendment's adopted.

Would you care to remark further on the bill before

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us, as amended?

Representative Prelli of the 63rd.

REP. PRELLI: (63RD)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the Clerk has an amendment, LCO number 3634. Could he please call and I be allowed to summarize?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Would the Clerk please call LCO 3634, designated House "C".

CLERK:

LCO number 3634, House "C" offered by Representatives Prelli, Godfrey, et al.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Prelli.

REP. PRELLI: (63RD)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, this is an amendment that brings forward a bill that was voted out of the Education Committee on its last day, but there was an error when it was sent up to LCO and it didn't completely come out, so we didn't have the file in front of us. So instead, it's coming forward as an amendment.

What this bill would do would do is it would require that each local and regional board of education set aside a time each day to say the Pledge of Allegiance and I move its adoption.

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DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

The question before us is on adoption of the amendment. Would you care to remark further?

REP. PRELLI: (63RD)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes, I would.

The Pledge of Allegiance takes eleven seconds during the day. Eleven seconds to be set aside in each day so that we can teach the basics, the important basics on which our country was developed.

Those are the principles that are set forward in the Pledge.

I've heard the comments that we can't mandate patriotism. This bill is not trying to do that. I've heard the comments that we can't make everybody say the Pledge and if you read carefully in lines 7 and 8, you'll notice we're not trying to do that. This sets aside a time that we would be saying the Pledge, but it does not require that everybody says the Pledge.

Madam Speaker, we can't mandate patriotism, I agree with that. But if we never teach what our country stands for, if we never take it upon ourselves to move forward on the importance of what our country is built upon, then how will the people coming along and the children coming along ever learn those strengths?

That's why I think this bill is important, Madam

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Speaker and I ask for your support in adopting it.

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

The question before us is on adoption of the amendment.

REP. PRELLI: (63RD)

Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Prelli.

REP. PRELLI: (63RD)

Just one more thing, Madam Speaker. I ask that when the vote be taken, it be taken by roll call.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

All those in favor of a roll call vote, please signify by saying aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

The minimum of 20% has been met. It will be taken by roll.

Representative Cardin of the 53rd.

REP. CARDIN: (53RD)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I propose a question to the proponent of the amendment?

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DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. CARDIN: (53RD)

Through you, Madam Speaker to the proponent. He had mentioned in his comments on the amendment that one of the goals, I think and please correct me if I'm wrong, is to try and teach patriotism by offering a time for the Pledge of Allegiance.

I was wondering if he could expand upon that, just a bit.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Prelli.

REP. PRELLI: (63RD)

Madam Speaker, if I said I wanted to teach patriotism, I was wrong. I might have mis-stated. What I said was I wanted to teach a respect for our country on the basis and the qualities on which it was built on. I believe that will lead to patriotism, but we're not teaching patriotism and I might have mis-spoken.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Cardin.

REP. CARDIN: (53RD)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. One of the concerns I have about this amendment is the school district I work

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in does offer time for the Pledge of Allegiance and as some of my seat mates just mentioned here, they're are kind of surprised that there are schools out there that do not offer time for the Pledge of Allegiance.

The concern that I have and I see every day in the classroom is we can't mandate a student to stand up and offer their pledge of allegiance to the flag and I'm not really sure what it is we're trying to accomplish.

I think that any teacher, certainly any history teacher, with the new civics requirement we have going into place next year, any teacher in that course is trying to instill in students a love for the flag, a love for the freedoms we enjoy as Americans, and I don't think that this amendment is the appropriate way to do it.

And I would encourage my colleagues to reject it.

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark further?

Representative San Angelo of the 131st.

REP. SAN ANGELO: (131ST)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I also wanted to rise in support of this particular amendment. And I do want to point out that there's no requirement that a student

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stand up and do the Pledge of Allegiance. As a matter of fact, as I read this, it specifically says that there's nothing that requires a person to do that and I think that's good because there are some foreign students in our school system and I don't think we should require them to say the Pledge of Allegiance to this country.

However, I think that most parents and frankly, most people I think still believe that the schools are putting the time in to allow students to cite the pledge. I think it really makes sense, especially in light of what recently has happened to this country.

I think it's a good provision, something that I think most of us enjoyed doing when we were students. So I think the amendment makes a lot of sense. It ought to be law and we ought to allow that time the students can participate and understand how important democracy is to this country.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Boucher of the 143rd.

REP. BOUCHER: (143RD)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise in strong support of this amendment by Representative Prelli.

I commend him for his courage in bringing this out.

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I think that since we all start every one of our legislative sessions with the Pledge of Allegiance, this symbol of a democracy we live in, and we need this type of modelling in all of our schools, given the times that we live in, it is time for us to reaffirm that, even if it is a voluntary situation, but it is a symbol and it is a model for our students. And, in fact, many parents throughout the State are quite surprised that it isn't being done even currently today.

So, I urge everyone's support of this amendment.

Thank you very much.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, Madam.

Representative Powers of the 151st.

REP. POWERS: (151ST).

Thank you, Madam Speaker. My name is on this amendment for a very simple reason. I got a number of phone calls after 9-11 and an article in our local paper whereby one of our junior highs, the students got together and signed a petition and took it to the principal.

And they said, we want to start saying the Pledge of Allegiance. We used to say it in elementary school, but when we came to middle school, we stopped saying it.

And, as I said, there was an article on the front

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page of our local paper and parents were appalled. They had not idea their children had stopped saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

So, to dismiss this bill as unnecessary or just window dressing I think is inappropriate and it does speak to situations in schools all across the State whereby, very quietly, the Pledge has kind of disappeared from the school day and this will, I think, in a very fair and permissive way, allow that pledge to be reintroduced back into the school day for our kids.

Thank you very much.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, Madam.

Representative Kirkley-Bey of the 5th.

REP. KIRKLEY-BEY: (5TH)

Good evening, Madam Speaker.

There are a couple of things I would like to say. I'm not speaking against the amendment. But there are a couple of things that I'd like to say with regard to the amendment.

First of all, I know that Jehovah Witnesses do not say the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag because it is contrary to their religious beliefs. And they believe very strongly in the separation of church and state.

And as Representative San Angelo said, that there

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might be children from foreign countries who are here who don't feel that it is proper for them, at this juncture in their lives, to say the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

And I just wanted to make sure that when we ask this, that teachers or others make the children aware that because someone doesn't say it, that they should not be ostracized or anything else by their peers and fellow classmen.

The other thing that I think is important is anybody can learn repetition and we say the Pledge, I pledge allegiance to the flag -- but do we know and listen to what those words really mean? And I believe that if we're going to have children learn the Pledge of Allegiance and recite it on a daily basis, it is incumbent upon those teachers to sit down and explain to them exactly what they're pledging to and what that means so that the power that is behind the pledge, just like it is in our National Anthem, is understood and felt by the seniors. Just because you can recite something, does not necessarily mean you understand what it means.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you.

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Representative Beals of the 88th.

REP. BEALS: (88TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Some questions, through you, to the proponent of the amendment.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Please phrase your questions, Madam.

REP. BEALS: (88TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Through you.

Representative Prelli, do you have any idea how many schools in the State do not have a time for children to say the Pledge?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Prelli.

REP. PRELLI: (63RD)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Through you. I don't have an exact count. I know that some schools were not saying the Pledge as Representative Powers brought out. After 9-11, some of them started saying the Pledge.

I looked around and it tends to be more in the high schools, but some elementary schools have also stopped saying the Pledge.

I would say that many of them do say the Pledge, but I think some don't and I just think that it makes sense that we have a policy for them to say it.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

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DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Beals.

REP. BEALS: (88TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. And how would you envision this being enforced, if it should become law?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Prelli.

REP. PRELLI: (63RD)

It would be up to the policy developed by the school board. I think the school board is just setting aside that time and would enforce it.

We have laws on the books now that aren't enforced by that, such as the flag in each classroom, which would charge a fine to each school board member. I don't see that. I think it's just up to the school boards to set the policy and then bring it forward and make sure it's being followed in their town.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Beals.

REP. BEALS: (88TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would there be a consequence for a board that failed to establish a policy?

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Representative Prelli.

REP. PRELLI: (63RD)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Through you. No more than not establishing any other policy. I think it would be -- we make them establish policies on anything and one of the things we're establishing in this bill is a policy on bullying.

We pass the laws into it. If we notice a town is not doing it, it would be up to the Department of Education to inform them of the law and make sure they follow it.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Beals.

REP. BEALS: (88TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just a final comment. I believe the example that was given by Representative Powers is an excellent example of why this can and should be a local decision. I'm assuming that the parents who became so horrified when they realized their children were not saying the Pledge, informed the board of their concern and either got something in response or perhaps elected a new board.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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Thank you, Madam.

Representative Nystrom of the 46th.

REP. NYSTROM: (46TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will be brief, rising in support of this amendment.

This past weekend we had a program in Norwich at the VFW. It was in remembrance of our veterans of Vietnam and the price that was paid, the price they continued to pay when they returned to this country and it reminded me of a couple of things.

The right to dissent, the freedoms that we have and share, but the ultimate price paid by those who never returned reminded me most of them and of those who are still missing.

I think the Pledge unifies us as a nation and I think if there's one lesson that we impart to our children is how we lead. We lead every day with the Pledge here in this Hall. Why one would question whether children should not be able to participate in that, again, by choice, because there is nothing in this language that enforces anyone to do anything. But for it not to be something of importance for our school boards to acknowledge, I'm shocked that we're here doing this, as others were across the State, the fact that it no longer is part of the normal routine of the day.

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We need to do this. It should be the policy of the State. I'm sorry it has to be, but this is a good amendment and it ought to pass.

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Godfrey of the 110th.

REP. GODFREY: (110TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, my name is also on this amendment. I do rise in strong support of it.

The Pledge of Allegiance certainly is to the flag, which is the symbol that brings us all together. It's the symbol of a nation. It's a symbol of a people who have come together from all over the world to join together to blend their lives for the common good and because of the common good, moving forward, the individual good also moves forward.

It's just a wonderful historical series of events that we all benefit from. So, being able to impart this history, being able to explain to young people what the flag is, what the flag is all about. One of the drafts of this amendment included a flag etiquette, a history of the flag, how that has meant so much to so many people over the almost 250 years that this country has

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gone on.

When, in my own neighborhood, very frequently because there are a number of war memorials within two blocks of my house with a variety of the Korean War and the Vietnam War and World War II, World War I, I often point out, at our various Memorial Day and Veterans Day activities that take place there, it is very, very good to remember the veterans. It's very, very good to remember the people from this country, men and women alike, who have gone overseas very, very far from home and family and have given their all, the full measure of their lives to defend this country under this flag.

But I also point out to them, when this happens, we don't just have to look to people who went overseas. Within yards of my house, during the Revolutionary War, when General Tyron came out of New York to raid the storage in Danbury and to fight in what turned out to be called the Battle of Ridgefield, men died right in Danbury, Connecticut, just a few feet, yards from my house.

So you don't have to go far to see where the blood of patriots has been shed. And the red in the flag does symbolize that blood that has been shed for us.

To pass that along to children is a very, very dear thing. Again, it helps bind us together.

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And remember when you recite the Pledge, every once in a while do stop and not say it just by row, but think of the words. The Pledge is not just to the flag, but it's also to the republic, for which it stands, precisely the republic that we represent here. And again, to remind children that this government of, by and for the people has come together because it is designed to bring us all together. It's just very, very important to make sure that is not merely on the record, it's not merely taught as curriculum, but is taught to be cherished, taught to be recited daily, taught to be a full part of each of our lives.

So I very, very strongly urge my colleagues to join me and others in supporting this amendment that does nothing more than ask boards of education to set aside time in order to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. I hope it will prompt other curriculum. I hope it will prompt more discussion of the history of the State and of this nation. Just a few years ago we passed a law that required civics to be taught on the high school level. What we can do is start that a little earlier even in the grammar school level just with a very simple recitation of a very short Pledge of Allegiance to both the flag and the republic and I would urge, urge people to join together tonight here and adopt this amendment.

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Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Green of the 1st.

REP. GREEN: (1ST)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, just a couple of questions to the proponent of the amendment.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. GREEN: (1ST)

Thank you. I see here that you want to have a policy to ensure that time is available each school day. And I know that the boards -- the Department of Education has required schools to set a certain amount of time for instruction and other kinds of things and school systems have talked about really not having any other free time available.

With this setting aside time, are you suggesting that the school systems must extend their school hours?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Prelli.

REP. PRELLI: (63RD)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Through you. In response, it takes eleven seconds to say the Pledge. I'm not saying they have to extend anymore time. I think we can

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find eleven seconds during the day. I will tell you that if a bill came forward to say that we should extend the school day, I would support that.

But this does not require that to be done. I think eleven seconds -- and I would prefer it to be first thing in the morning, but I'm not mandating to the schools when they do it. So I think in any school day, we can find that eleven seconds.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Green.

REP. GREEN: (1ST)

Thank you. Actually, that was the only question I had. And a couple of comments.

Representative Kirkley-Bey talked about that it is very important that not only we probably suggest to our students that they pledge the allegiance, but that the students know what the meaning of the words are and that they understand it if they're going to choose to do that.

And when we talk about liberty and justice for all, I wonder if we have asked young people, do they believe that this country continues to provide liberty and justice for all. And I would probably say if you asked a lot of young people, they would probably say that they

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don't always see liberty and justice for all. So I think we have to do more sometimes than just say this is what we should require the students to do and then when students say to us, as adults again, well you want me to say this, but I don't see liberty, I don't see justice and this is why because this is what happened to me and then they want to talk to you about it. You really have to try to address that with them.

So we can't continue to just have young people say these things and then when they question us about it, we say wait a minute, you maybe anti-patriotic or whatever. You've got to real careful when you just have these kids do this.

Young people talk about you're requiring us to do all these things and we don't know why, this is not preparing us for the real world, this is not providing us with any information that we need in our lives.

So let's just really be careful to say that they need this, they need to understand this and this is the best thing for them when we are really are not ready to deal with them on some other issues.

It's a little bit confusing to me in a little bit of a way, again, being a school social worker where I have to deal with young people every day to answer these tough questions and really to -- and as I talk to them

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about what I do here, and I ask them about legislation and I try to get their opinion, they offer me some of the best, I think, information and knowledge to direct me into understanding where they're coming from because I can sit here and say, we as adults are doing this. And they say, wait a minute, Mr. Green, did you understand where we may be coming from or do you understand how we feel?

Let's say, for example, we do not require this Pledge of Allegiance by all students. I'm sitting here, my colleague, Representative Graziani sits there. Someone sits in the middle of us. They decide not to stand up. We stand up and we pledge. We turn around and we say something that ridicules that person, something that harasses that person, something that intimidates that person to make them feel they're less patriotic than we are.

If, after the first week, we do that twice, we now have to report bullying, which is this act that we're passing it on.

So we're going to say you don't have to do this, you don't have to stand up for the Pledge and I actually support the expression of the Pledge of Allegiance. However, because schools have that option, I don't know if we should require it.

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So we're going to say you don't have to stand up, you don't have to do that. I can almost assure you someone's going to say something to that child that is either ridiculing, intimidating, other kinds of acts that may express that person is not as patriotic, is not as caring as the next person. If we say that twice, and that child reports it, we have an act of bullying.

And so even though I support the bullying thing, we're opening up the thing and we're saying this is what adults do. We say that we want to be careful and I heard a number of people from both sides of the aisle talk about the real concerns about bullying. Then we do this and we say, but you have an option. And then we say well, kids don't have to do this. This is how it starts. We say kids have an option, and then the other kids say well, wait a minute, I was told that you're anti-American if you don't pledge. So you're a jerk and you don't believe in the country and the person starts to cry. And then the next day he doesn't do it and I say, call him a few more names.

This is what the kids tell us about adults. Here we go again. This is the kind of thing I think not only confuses the kids, it doesn't help them.

The schools have the option now. Let's encourage the schools to do that. Let's not legislate it with a

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"shall" amendment.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Noujaim of the 74th.

REP. NOUJAIM: (74TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise in strong support of this amendment.

You see, Madam Speaker, I bring a very unique perspective to this discussion. Many of my colleagues know that I was born and I was raised outside this country and I travelled throughout the world.

There are hundreds of millions of people outside this country who will die, who will kill to have the privilege of standing and pledging allegiance to their flag. It is a privilege that we have, a freedom that we should enjoy.

And many times we take it for granted. We take our flag for granted when we don't give it the appropriate respect. Pledging allegiance to the flag is respect to one's family, one's community, and one's life and one's way of living in this country.

When my kids were born and after I became an American citizen, the first thing I taught them was allegiance to the flag. They learned how to say it before they started speaking plain words or sentences.

This is something I truly believe in. I support it.

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And I will support this amendment with a great deal of privilege.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Malone of the 47th.

REP. MALONE: (47TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a difficult spot following that gentleman, which I acknowledge. But I stand up here to tell you that each day when we recite the Pledge of Allegiance, I do so patriotically. I do so with vigor. I do so with glee.

I did that when I was in school. And I will continue to do that and I enjoy doing it.

I share the same emotion that Representative Nystrom shares, but for a different reason because I'm a little puzzled why we're doing this. I want to report to the Chamber we do have already a national day of recognition for our flag. June 14th is the National Flag Day, has been since an act of Congress that was signed by Harry Truman in 1949. Woodrow Wilson, in 1916 first put the seal of the government on the national recognition of the flag day and the anniversary of the flag's adoption is our national symbol.

So I'm a little puzzled why we would do this. I'm

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struck somewhat by the remarks of my colleague, Representative Powers who noted that this wonderful thing happened in a classroom in her district. That the young people in that school said wait a minute, we're not doing the Pledge of Allegiance and we want to do that. I think that is a terrific thing. I think that kind of patriotism is very well received. I applaud that.

I also think that - I also feel there should be shame on any board of education in the State of Connecticut that needs a law from us to require or to expect that the Pledge of Allegiance be said in the classroom.

And I don't want, in any way, shape, or form for my comments here to appear some place else as me not being a patriot, because I am as much a patriot as anybody in this room. In fact, I served my country and was prepared to defend my country and its flag for all of that time and I would do so again today.

I just feel this is somewhat unnecessary. I want to bring to everybody's attention the importance of Flag Day, still celebrated throughout this State, throughout this nation as the day of learning, the day of our recollection, the day of education about the flag and the importance of that flag.

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You know, I have worked with my fellow American Legionnaires for a number of years. We worked on the issue of getting Congress to pass a law that would make it illegal to burn the American flag and I did so with vigor, I did so earnestly in wanting to make certain that happened, but I did so knowing full well that the very symbol of that flag is - it also captures the right of someone, however distasteful it is, to tarnish that flag and to tarnish this country.

The flag symbolizes the liberty we have here and we've got to remember, the liberty we have here allows someone to say something so distasteful about us, about our country, and about our flag that we want to go to extreme measures. But the liberty that is embodied in the American flag that we have gives people the right to say that, however offensive it is.

I say that because the flag is an emotional topic. It obviously is an emotional topic. Who would have believed it would have come up tonight as an emotional topic under this particular bill?

But it's so important to me, I don't want to see it be brought before this Chamber in a manner that will be divisive. This is the American symbol. The bill before us is about bullying behavior in school. The amendment before us is about a very, very large issue, a very,

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very important issue that shouldn't be discussed here or shouldn't be debated in an amendment on a school bill.

If we want to talk about the flag, the things that are embodied in the flag and having school kids embrace the American flag, I think it's an important enough issue that it should be separated out and shouldn't be part of this bill tonight. I don't think it's fair to our flag.

It is our national symbol. It is not some side-bar to the bullying behavior in schools bill.

Again, I say this because I feel very strongly about it. I don't want it to be construed as me not being a patriot. I will defend that flag today. Until I die, I'll defend that flag.

It shouldn't be before us today. We are doing something redundant here. Those who have come before us in Congress have seen the wisdom of having the flag recognized, have set aside a day for education and declaration and to honor our flag. That's in place.

What we would do here tonight, I don't know if it would make any sense. I go back to the wonderful things that the kids did in that school and said we want to do the Pledge of Allegiance every day, please allow us to do it. Those kinds of things, particularly in a day and age in our state and in our nation are really beautiful

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and are really a beautiful tribute to our flag.

I think to pass an amendment or to vote on an amendment tonight, taking away the right of those kids to say to themselves, you know what, school teachers and school administrators, we want to do the Pledge of Allegiance, would do a disservice to those kids who at some time would realize this flag is a symbol of our nation and a very important one at that.

I don't think we should do that tonight. I think this amendment minimizes the importance of the flag and I don't think it should be before us.

And again I'll say, as I finish, Madam Speaker, because I do not want to be conveyed as not a patriot, or unpatriotic, I don't think it belongs here and it pains me, it pains me greatly, Madam Speaker, that when this bill is voted on, I'm going to have to vote no on it. I want to tell you, I'm going to vote no for those reasons.

And I thank you for your time and the time of my colleagues.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Googins of the 31st.

REP. GOOGINS: (31ST)

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Good evening, Madam Speaker. First, I wish to congratulate and thank the makers of the amendment, as well as the maker of the underlying bill first for waking me up at this time of the evening that my brain came to as it has been slumbering during part of the evening. And also my spirits were restored that we could do a couple of very important things in the amendment and the underlying bill.

There have been so many heartfelt sincere words on both sides of the issue and if this is the vehicle to raise the consciousness that bullying is not an appropriate thing to happen in our society and that to honor the flag is an appropriate move for us to honor in our society, there is a wonderful dual purpose and I don't care how it comes to me. If I have an opportunity to support both, I will do them as companions.

It is something we should -- the flag amendment is something that we should honor, we should encourage. We have the right as a legislative body to raise the consciousness of our citizens and our children, in particular and to reinforce that this is not a country in our schools and our personal lives where we should encourage bullying, I heartedly support it and again, it would be a wonderful way to end this evening with a vote on both of these measures. And I will be particularly

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proud of this session when I go away from it to say I know I've done at least two good things.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, Madam.

Representative Carter of the 7th.

REP. CARTER: (7TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. The flag is a very important part of this country. And when we say the Pledge and we say liberty and justice for all, it all depends upon where you live.

If you look in north Hartford in the summertime especially and the kids are out and the kids are playing and you have a wild cop come down the street, stop a cruiser, get out of it, go into the trunk and pull out a shotgun and threaten a group of Black youngsters, there's no liberty and no justice for them.

And that is the largest form of bullying. And for us to take this bill and try to make it compatible to making sure we talk about everyone in this country having liberty and justice and making sure we tell youngsters to believe that, then that should be preached.

And in Hartford, that situation didn't stop for a whole summer until a cop finally shot one of the kids in

the back. And then they put him on desk duty. The kid's that dead had no liberty and no justice.

So, I would say to you, when you put a bill like this together or an amendment like this together, it would be kind to talk to everyone or some of the people in the General Assembly that this may not effect so graciously as it does others.

I'm not going to tell anybody in this General Assembly to ever disrespect the flag or ever disrespect the Pledge if that's what they want, but you know in your heart that there is not liberty and justice for everyone in this State.

And so, to be proud, be proud of America because there are a whole lot of things done in other countries that's not done in America, but America has a lot to be ashamed of.

And for us to try and cram some things down the throats of people without ever considering them, without every saying let me find out what your opinion is, try coming into the Black community and talking to them because they don't live in a town that is all White and is getting this liberty and justice.

Everybody in north Hartford are not drug addicts, but they're considered that, and so they have no justice at that point. And now we're going to say to those same

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youngsters who were threatened by a police officer, now we want you to go to school and do the Pledge of Allegiance to these United States of America. And do not consider that you're being bullied by some policeman out there on the street.

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, Madam.

Representative Graziani of the 57th.

REP. GRAZIANI: (57TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have some strong thoughts on this. Number one, I know members of this Chamber served in the military, whether it be World War II, Vietnam, Korea, Desert Storm. I, for one, served in Vietnam in 1967 and 1968 and I know Reggie Beamon served, as well.

But the Pledge of Allegiance is a great thing and an honorable thing, but I don't think it goes far enough. If we're asking our school systems to mandate that we say the Pledge of Allegiance, let's talk about some of the school systems that are thinking of not recognizing Veterans Day off. What message are we telling our kids?

Let's talk about Memorial Day. When you ask those kids, what's the meaning of Memorial Day? And the

response is, it's a day off from school. That's sad. This doesn't go far enough. We're saying let's say that we'll make you recite the Pledge of Allegiance and then we'll forget about it and we'll move on, but by God, we won't teach the meaning of Veterans Day or the importance of Memorial Day, which I think is truly tragic.

I don't know how I'm going to vote on this. I have strong feelings on this and it's unfortunate, I must say, that an amendment like this, which is a common sense approach, has to be legislated by us here in this body, when we all know what the right thing is to do.

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Mikutel of the 45th.

REP. MIKUTEL: (45TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I just want to say I've heard it said here in this Chamber that in America there's a lot to be ashamed of. But I want it on the record that in America, there's a lot to be proud of.

And while there may not be as much liberty and justice in America as we would like, I believe there's more liberty and justice in America than any other

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nation in the world. And I want that on the record.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Kirkley-Bey of the 5th, for the second time.

REP. KIRKLEY-BEY: (5TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. For the second time. As I've listened to the dialogue here, my mind has gone back to the caucus that we had earlier this evening when we talked about the great deal and the amount of monies that we're going to have to try to come up with in order to be able to close the budget gap.

And for some reason, I don't know why, I have been very good this year in keeping my mouth shut. But I think that is about to end and the reason that I say that is we're talking about how wonderful the Pledge of Allegiance is and I do believe that with all my heart.

I can remember my grandparents, in their immigration to this country and the fact they couldn't speak and the opportunity that they provided for me, a second generation, Cape Verdian in this country.

But I also see the liberty and justice that will not be in this budget if you're poor, if you live in the cities, if you're a drug addict, if you're in prison, if you have mental health problems. So while we talk about

it, we're not even going to deliver it, liberty and justice for all.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, Madam.

Representative Spallone of the 36th.

REP. SPALLONE: (36TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I rise to speak very briefly regarding this amendment and I speak so that any vote I cast may not be misconstrued.

I listened very carefully to Representative Malone's remarks and found them very eloquent. And the one small point that I wanted to make this evening is that the strength of this nation, the strength of this State, the strength of the Constitution of the United States and the State of Connecticut is that we do not need in this country to mandate or to encourage, through state action, patriotism.

Patriotism in the United States of America has been shown time and time again to spring from the heart as it did in the example made by Representative Powers.

So, for that reason, for that reason, I have very, very strong concerns about this amendment. I don't believe it's necessary and I thank you for your time.

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Thank you, sir.

Representative Cafero of the 142nd.

REP. CAFERO: (142ND)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I listened to Representative Malone and was very moved by what he said. I happen to be 44 years of age and part of a generation that did not have an opportunity, even if we chose to, frankly, to serve in the armed services. I don't have 1/100th of the experience to my country or service to my country as Representative Malone or maybe many other members of this Chamber.

I do not question their patriotism in the least bit, but I do question the concern about this amendment.

If the amendment said that we mandate that every student say the Pledge of Allegiance, I would be the first person up to speak against that. That is not what this amendment says.

It is my understanding that this amendment says that a regional or a local board of education shall develop a policy to ensure that time is made available for the saying of the Pledge of Allegiance. And it specifically says, that it is not to be construed to require any person to say the Pledge of Allegiance.

I think back, at least my ten years in this Chamber, and the various bills that we have passed. I

look at our educational statutes today. I look that we, as an assembly, have passed laws that have required that every school district offer courses of instruction in the dangers of gang membership, accident prevention, language, arts, social studies, substance abuse, smoking, drug abuse, etcetera.

I look at our educational statutes and I see that it mandates that our State Board of Education make available curriculum on the Holocaust, on the historical events surrounding the great famine in Ireland, on the African American history, on Puerto Rican history, on Native American history, on personal financial management, topics approved by the State Board upon the request of local or regional boards of education.

This amendment simply states that our school districts, which are part of this state, which is part of the United States of America, make some time to say the eleven second Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, something that we, everyone of us here, do every single time that we enter this Chamber.

If one does not want to do it in this body, we simply make ourselves not available here, we walk out the door, or we don't participate.

If someone does not want to do it in school to this day, where there are schools that do the Pledge of

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Allegiance, they may remain seated, they may excuse themselves from the room.

This amendment forces no one to do anything they do not want to do. It simply recognizes the fact that we are part of the United States of America. And that as that country, we have a pledge of allegiance that has been around for a long, long time.

Is there justice and liberty for all? Absolutely not. And I defy anyone in this Chamber to point to a country or any society that has liberty and justice for absolutely everybody. We are not perfect. But we are a great country. We prove it every day. And certainly, our greatness was tested and I think proven this year, especially.

Ladies and gentleman of the Chamber, this is not something that is testing anyone's patriotic fervor or loyalty to the flag. It simply does something that we do here every day with policies ranging from environment to criminal justice to education, etcetera.

It's asking that each local board of education that is responsible for the education of our young children, our future, as we all say, make some time to say the Pledge of Allegiance. That's all it says.

I don't think that is too much to ask. And I would hope that we could approve this amendment.

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Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Prelli of the 63rd. Would you care to speak, sir?

REP. PRELLI: (63RD)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I've sat here and I've listened to all the statements and I'm not going to say that anybody is unpatriotic, whether they vote for or against this amendment.

It was brought out as why is it attached as amendment to this bill? It's very simple, as I brought out when I brought out the amendment. The bill was actually passed out of the Education Committee, but because of a technical foul up, it didn't come forward as a bill.

Would I prefer to have the bill coming forward separately? Yes, I think we all would. But we have to look at vehicles that we might be able to attach it to and that's what we did here.

I heard the comments about well, we're making people say it or that we're telling the students, the school systems they have to do something without teaching them. I hope this is a start to teaching them.

I heard the comments that we're going to teach them

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civics. We don't teach them civics. We don't teach them U.S. History until 7th grade. We don't teach them civics until high school.

Isn't it important that we teach them the basis on what we believe and I truly mean that because I think we all believe that. What we believe our country stands for.

I heard the comment that there's not liberty and justice for all and I'm not going to just stand here, as Representative Cafero said, and tell you that I believe there is, but I do believe that is the standard that our country's built on. And I believe that is the goal that we are trying to reach for.

That's why I'm bringing this forward. I believe we need to move forward.

Over 100 years ago, the Pledge of Allegiance was started and it was started because some kids cared. And they moved forward and got the Pledge going.

In 1954, was the last time it was modified. And we've all read that. I think it's important, that's why I'm bringing it forward.

I think it's important that we start teaching what our country stands for at the earliest possible age. That's what this does.

Yes, we can't just say the Pledge and learn it and

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not understand what it means. We'd all be wrong if we believed that. But we can teach the Pledge and we can teach the basis for what we believe. What we all believe and what we believe our country should be.

We've heard that our country's not perfect. That's absolutely right. But we compare it to every other country on earth, and it's better. That doesn't mean we can't continue to grow and become better. We all strive to do that.

All I'm asking for this and the reason it's on this bill is because it does fit on this bill. All I'm asking is that we do something that most of us did growing up, most of us believed was required growing up. What we're now saying is that we'll set aside a time each day to show some respect to the country that's helped us all be better people and that we will teach our kids that they can also make this country a better place and they can be the base to bring more equities and more fairness to our country. They will learn this because we think it's important to be done.

I urge you to support this and I thank you for giving me the time to bring forward this amendment.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Would you care to remark further on the amendment

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before us? Would you care to remark further on the amendment?

If not, staff and guests to the Well of the House. The machine will be opened.

CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the Chamber. The House is voting House Amendment Schedule "C" by roll call. Members to the Chamber.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Have all members voted? Have all members voted? Please check the board and be sure your vote is properly cast.

If all members have voted, the machine will be locked. The Clerk will take a tally.

The Clerk will please announce the tally.

CLERK:

House Amendment Schedule "C" for H.B. 5425

Total Number Voting	140
Necessary for Adoption	71
Those voting Yea	118
Those voting Nay	22
Those absent and not Voting	11

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

The amendment's adopted.

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Would you care to remark further on the bill?

Representative Sawyer of the 55th.

REP. SAWYER: (55TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. And with the Chamber's indulgence, I would like to go back to Section 1 of the now current as amended bill that we have before us.

The issue that I had brought up earlier regarding on line 4 in Section 1, where the Board of Education would develop a policy for use on or after October 1, 2002. Again, my concern is that they would not be able to do that in time. If they only have the three months by the time that this is enacted, July 1st.

With so many functions that have to happen with the opening of school and certainly with the larger school systems that have many, many schools to review, how they would put this in play.

I would ask, Madam Speaker, would the Clerk please call LCO number 4347 and I be allowed to summarize.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Will the Clerk please call LCO 4347, designated House "D".

CLERK:

LCO number 4347, House "D" offered by Representative Sawyer.

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Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER: (55TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. This simply changes the date from October 1st to five months later to February 1, 2003 to give boards of education the time and I move passage.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

The question before us is on adoption of the amendment. Would you care to remark on the amendment before us?

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER: (55TH)

Madam Speaker, I believe that even those very few months takes a very complex subject and gives volunteer members who are elected to a board of education time to sit down with not only their administration, but also with their legal counsel to be able to put in a fair and equitable and very, very important piece in front of their board and their school system to become, hopefully, a permanent policy.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, Madam.

Representative Flaherty of the 8th.

REP. FLAHERTY: (8TH)

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Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise in support of the amendment. I'm a very strong supporter of the underlying bill. I believe it's very important, but I also believe that it's important that it be put in effect correctly, which means a few more months.

I urge adoption of the amendment.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Mushinsky of the 85th.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a friendly amendment by our former colleague from the Select Committee on Children and I urge your adoption.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

The question before us is on adoption. Would you care to remark further? Would you care to remark further on the amendment before us?

If not, I'll try your minds.

All those in favor, please signify by saying aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

All those opposed, nay. The amendment's adopted.

Would you care to remark further on the bill before

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us, as amended? Would you care to remark further on the bill before us, as amended?

If not, staff and guests to the Well of the House.

The machine will be opened.

CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the Chamber. The House is voting by roll call. Members to the Chamber, please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Are there any announcements or points of personal privilege? Oh, I'm sorry, excuse me.

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? Please check the board and be sure your vote is properly cast.

If all members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally.

The Clerk will please announce the tally. I'm sorry, Representative O'Neill, I did not see you. For what purpose do you rise sir?

REP. O'NEILL: (69TH)

May I be allowed to vote in the affirmative, Madam Speaker?

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

The Journal will so note it.

REP. O'NEILL: (69TH)

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Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Belden.

REP. BELDEN: (113TH)

Madam Speaker, there were members in the Chamber who did not vote. And I believe our precedent and our rules have always indicated to members in the Chamber they shall vote. And that's not the case. I tried to get your attention before you called the vote, but I believe perhaps the gentleman might want to make comment on that issue.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Pudlin.

REP. PUDLIN: (24TH)

I'm standing here with a few other people with the exact same question. If you're naming names, it would be helpful in a positive way.

Certainly, if I didn't and I meant to vote in the positive and if anyone else wants to pick up a microphone, this is a good time to do it.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Pudlin, it will be so noted.

Representative Godfrey.

REP. GODFREY: (110TH)

And I'd like to be recorded in the affirmative also, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Representative Godfrey, it shall be so noted.

The Journal will be noted appropriately.

Is there anyone else? Representative Gerratana.

REP. GERRATANA: (23RD)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. In the affirmative, please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

Thank you, Madam. The Journal will so note.

Is there any other member who is not recorded who would now like to be recorded?

Will the Clerk please now announce the tally.

CLERK:

H.B. 5425, as amended by House Amendment Schedules "B", "C", and "D".

Total Number Voting	139
Necessary for Passage	70
Those voting Yea	133
Those voting Nay	6
Those absent and not Voting	12

DEPUTY SPEAKER CURREY:

The bill, as amended passes.

Are there any announcements or points of personal

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added to do a plan for children in homeland protection and also that this be done in consultation with the Connecticut Office of Emergency Management because they're the ones aware of the dollars and of the overall plan.

In response to H.B. 5425, the school reporting on bullying, I really want to commend the Committee on this bill. We just, as many of you know, had a death in Meriden of a young child who suicided in a closet. He hung himself. And he had been bullied. We also had a child in the New Haven area, a girl who almost killed herself recently due to bullying. We know from bullying that unlike many, many problems that this one is really dangerous. That bullying can cause very serious depression and suicide for those who are the target.

For the bully, we see now longitudinally, that the child who is a bully, if he or she does not receive intervention by the age of 20, that child is already in our court system and by the age of 30, that child has now become in adult life, a felon.

What was once a sort of Huck Finn/Tom Sawyer situation of bullying, and boys will be boys, is now really frankly, beyond metaphor of how far we have let aggression go in our country and we need to rein it back in.

I have a few suggestions on that bill, however. Having worked with the schools as the Co-Chair for the Governor and Commissioner Sergi on bullying, we've seen that there might be a resistance to reporting bullying incidents and it might lead actually to thinning of definition and of sort of going underground.

I'd like to offer an alternative in this bill which is that schools should report on what they are doing to reduce aggression, including bullying and hazing and that they should report on whether or not in their methodology they have seen a decrease or an increase in such incidents. That would allow us to look at whether or not they are doing anything, rather than just reporting a number.

What we are seeing is that there's no time to spare on this matter and I would offer the suggestion that a systemic response by asking them what they're doing and reporting that out each year to reduce aggression would be most helpful to us.

We do know that the better anti-bullying programs are working. The Dan Olweus program that was built in Scandinavia because of the number of suicides there has now been tested in our country and it is reducing youth aggression in schools by 50% in two years and there's another model that's been tested now in Manhattan and it's reducing aggression by 35% in two years and also increasing teacher participation and awareness of how to intervene substantively.

So there are models that work. There are also, frankly, models that do not work. It would be helpful to get our arms around this by seeing what the schools are doing.

I also want to highlight for you that last year there was a bill that passed, the Safe Learning Act. It was folded into the Department of Social Services' Approps bill at the end of session because of time limitations. In the Safe Learning Act we enumerated in detail an opportunity for schools to take part in rendering schools safer and we explicitly listed bullying.

There was a private donor who offered a half a million dollars and the state matched this with another half a million, so we have \$1 million for anti-bully programs in schools now. That half a million was a one time allocation on the state level. We may want to consider having that be more than a one year opportunity. And the private donor has committed to matching dollar for dollar the state donations.

I would also like to recommend that you utilize the international definition of bullying, instead of letting schools come up with the definition and I have put in my testimony the definition. And the reason for this is that some people call bullying just a fight.

You know, Representative Tercyak and I could get in a fight and be mean with each other for one day. That's because we're humans and we could maybe do that. But, that's not bullying.

Bullying is ongoing, routine, intentional use of power against someone else because of a difference. And it can be verbal, physical or social isolation but it goes on for a long period of time. So I fear that without being explicit about the international definition, there's a risk that schools will define it in ways to decrease their numbers and their reportage.

We would also like to offer our support for S.B. 335 and S.B. 337 and H.B. 5176 and offer a technical suggestion in S.B. 337 that as DSS reports on fatherhood, that they have the opportunity to do this annually so we can hear how things are going in a routine way. Thank you. I'm available for any questions.

REP. MUSHINSKY: Okay, Elaine, I want to talk to you about the (inaudible) bill for a moment.

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: Okay.

REP. MUSHINSKY: And thank you for testifying on it. I am more worried that letting them decide what to report is going to be a problem. In the Meriden case which is what prompted me to put this bill in, the parents, if you talk to them, they'll tell you, this pattern was going on for months and through the school year and that they did file complaints with the school and that it was ignored.

There also appears to be anecdotally a difference between schools on the rate of bullying, that in some schools it is tolerated and some schools there's a clear policy against it.

So I'm concerned that if we take your advice and leave it up to the schools reporting what they're doing to reduce, I'm afraid we'll get the sugar coated version from the schools and we won't really know which schools are not taking it seriously and

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which schools are and that's why I'm trying to get some concrete numbers.

I'd like to see where the spikes are in the municipality, what schools have a spike of bullying incidents just as we do now for academic testing. Where do we have the problems, so then we can target resources to try to fix it. So I'm antsy about your suggestion to let them self-report. And we can talk about that for a minute. But I am happy about your definition. We were having a really hard time writing this bill. It's very hard to distinguish what it is.

The one I'm looking at is the persistent pattern and the new information we have scientifically, the Scientific American for this month, for March, this coming month, is that there's long term stress on a child actually causes permanent brain damage to the child that cannot be fixed later. It cannot be fixed. It's not a matter of reprogramming the child to repair the damage. The damage is proven and the way they respond to stress later in their life is permanently changed because of what we allow to happen as adults.

So I'm really happy you brought in the definition and we're looking for a way to make this more clear what we're talking about to the school systems.

Just talk to me a minute about the self-reporting which I'm extremely anxious about. I'm not sure they wouldn't just sugar coat the reports if they had to self-determine what they were doing.

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: Well, as I hear you, I think our concerns actually are the same. I'm concerned that in their reporting about bullying that they will similarly sugar coat that and diminish their report. So I'm interested in the same goal, which is schools telling us what's going on, honestly reporting, finding out where there are bullying incidents and also a response, a systemic response and curricular intervention.

I think the international definition might help so that a school could not sugar coat the numbers. But

what I fear, after Columbine and after we brought Dan Olweus to Connecticut, we saw hundreds of schools and many, many school teachers requesting help. And what became imminently clear is that unlike many instances where schools feel burdened and don't want to take an issue on, the teachers want help in this.

When you are with teachers alone, they admit that they do not know how to intervene in bullying and that they want the tools. And the good news is, there are tools out there and there are researched based programs.

So what I'm striving toward in your bill is a mechanism by which schools would honestly report on incidents but also tell us what they're doing. Because just the number alone won't help us treat the problem.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (inaudible) not to having report the number. I'm interested in the number specifically to see where spikes are in the community, where the trends are, is the trend going up, is the trend going down, that's what I want to see.

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: I'm more concerned about, two things. One I think the number alone won't give you enough. So if you go for the number, also ask them what they're doing because we need to begin to see what schools are testing, what's working.

And my suggestion is, in the reportage, have them tell you whether the numbers have gone up or down based on what they're doing so we begin to see it systemically rather than just a number being reported. In other words, tell us what you're doing, tell us what the numbers were and tell us if by what you're doing has changed anything.

And the other thing to say to you is that, without some support which can be modest, I don't think schools can do something. We know what works in this method. We know that you need a whole school approach. If you just train one teacher it doesn't work. That there has to be an understanding with the children, with the parents, with the teachers

and with the ancillary staff which means those in the play yard, because bullies are very smart and they bully where they can't be seen.

So they bully in the bathroom, they bully on the buses, they bully on the way to school. We all know the story of the Norwalk case where this mother kept calling the school. Her little kids were being bullied on the way to school. Finally, in a fit of despair she gave her children tools to fight back and she was ethical and called the principal and said, my children are coming with their backpacks with tools and she was arrested.

And so suddenly, the question was taking the mother away from the mother, or the children away from the mother instead of having a systemic response.

So we know a whole school response works. We know modest interventions and pull outs do not work. We know that psychotherapy with the bully does not work, that it needs to be behavioral and the school needs to be in alignment in helping that child but psychotherapy doesn't work. It's much more behavioral interventions.

So I'd like to see schools intervene, not just tell you their numbers.

REP. MUSHINSKY: Great.

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: So, I'm with you. And in the report that we did for Commissioner Sergi and the Governor, we were asked to offer the best practices which are in your packet.

REP. MUSHINSKY: Okay. Does the international definition just cover physical or also mental?

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: The international definition of bullying, a person is being bullied when he or she is the target repeatedly and over time, of negative actions undertaken by one or several other individuals who are more powerful than the target in some way. Negative actions which can begin with name calling or social isolation and can build to actual attacks and/or attempts to injure or

humiliate another person include physical and verbal aggression, social alienation, intimidation, racial and ethnic harassment and sexual harassment.

So that is it. And that comes from, England is using that, Canada, many countries in Europe, largely through the leadership of Olweus who I trained under and it's really his message I'm giving you here.

REP. MUSHINSKY: That's very helpful. Thank you. Any questions? The fierce and aggressive Representative Tercyak wants to ask you a question.

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: Yes. Well, we have a terribly history of bullying each other. (LAUGHTER)

REP. TERCYAK: Yes, I want to get to that now.

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: Okay, I'm ready.

REP. TERCYAK: Would you identify those characteristics in me which will show you as a professional, which I may have as a potential bullier.

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: Yes, I understood you.

REP. TERCYAK: (Inaudible - sound fades out) at a very early stage in a child's development, (inaudible) Do you see any general characteristics that teachers, that a psychologist, nurses, could identify (inaudible).

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: Yes. I appreciate the question. And some of that you'll find in detail with the references, literature references in the report in your packet called Brave Enough to be Kind.

What we do know is, the standard caricature of a bully is that the bully is somehow not feeling very good about him or herself and that in some way, they're insecure even though, maybe they're large or whatever.

This is not the case. The literature shows us that the bully is just fine. The bully is okay. It's not a case of insecurity.

What you see largely with a bully is that the bully can be a child who shows a lack of empathy, so one of the characteristics might be that the child doesn't convey as much of a capacity for otherness as other children. That's one symptom, so that they tend to show less empathy toward others and less self regard which would allow them to be cruel. That's one.

Two, it is sometimes the case that the parents themselves are overly aggressive and abusive but it is not always the case. It is also sometimes the case that children who are bullies come from very permissive families where not enough limits are set. So we know sometimes excessive permissiveness, sometimes excessive aggression at home and often a lack of empathy.

The child somehow enjoys power. Would you see this and pick it up early? Not necessarily. This is what Representative Mushinsky's referencing because what often happens with the target, and I'll talk about the qualities of a target, too, what often happens with the target is that a child has been bullied for years before the child goes and gets help.

As soon as the child squeaked and told somebody but that somebody didn't quite know what to do and so nothing happened. Or, sometimes what happens is the child eventually tells somebody and the person isn't trained and the telling actually backfires and the child actually gets hurt. That's why this has to be systemic and entails a training.

The target tends to be a child who exhibits some form of shakiness. It could be that the child when yelled at doesn't say stop yelling at me. The child may show a sort of slight trembling. If somehow the person who enjoys power in attacking difference picks up that they can do this to that child and the child isn't somehow going to fight back and so they test it once, they test it twice, and then they keep going.

Often, the child exhibits a difference. Now the difference could be no big deal. It could be

freckles. But in some instances it's a special education child. In some instances it's a child who smells. Something could come up that could lead to a pushing and then the child for whatever reason doesn't, hasn't been taught to fight back not necessarily physically, I'm not suggesting that children retaliate with aggression physically, but somehow don't convey to the other a force of stuff it.

And then the group we haven't talked about at all, that's actually the most important in terms of change are the bystanders. And what we know is, that around 85% of children witness these, 85% children aren't involved in this and they witness it and they're the ones who can stop it.

When you attack me, Representative Tercyak, if I can have Senator Williams turn to you and say, you know, that's not cool, and actually we don't even want you on our football team any more if you keep that up. That's going to break it. So then it gets it out of just us.

But children have to be trained. And one of the problems, I mean, I've been traveling our state talking to kids about this, one of the problem in talking to the bullies and the targets, one of the problems is that kids, Senator Williams as a child might feel like he's tattling if he told Representative Mushinsky. And so, how do you get this out of tattle into helping schools be safe is very key.

Now, I don't know how to stress this more, but I testified on terrorism and bullying. They go together. I mean, there is not a better time in this state for us to be helping children around bullying because children know that the world is not safe. In fact, I heard a story I think Senator Williams and Representative Truglia were there also when Senator Dodd was here.

Someone told a story in Fairfield County of a child who was a terrible bully, but the day after September 11th went into a clinic and couldn't stop sobbing and said, I'll never do this again.

Children want schools to be safe and this is an opportunity. And they also have seen that our country got hurt because of difference and so children actually now might be more ready to be trained to learn how to keep their schools safe from the inside.

REP. TYMNIAK: I have a question regarding school safety. (Inaudible-not using mike)

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: I don't, but I would be glad to get you information. I'd be glad to get that back to you. I did have an opportunity to meet with Mr. Willsey who's heading emergency management for the Governor and he has expressed a keen interest in making sure that every school is safe on each domain. Physical, exiting, psychological and communications patterns.

We're not doing those evenly and I think when we think of school safety we may think about windows or a button or an evacuation, but evacuation in these situations is dramatically different, so I'll be glad to get that for you.

REP. MUSHINSKY: I have one more question before you go, okay? Did anybody else have a question? Do you recommend that part of this program be to have anonymous reporting of bullying incidents? Would that, the kids who are under peer pressure not to report, if the schools had a system for anonymous reporting?

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: Once we began to have the number of suicides they did, and they were trying to find out why so many children were killing themselves and they understood over a time that it was bullying, they designed a model that is now the country's law that every school must have an anti-bullying program.

And what they designed, which is an answer to what you're raising, is, every school has to have a pre and post questionnaire. And the children all have to fill out a questionnaire about whether they feel safe. These questionnaires are fabulous and

they're developmentally appropriate so that a kindergarten child fills it out by having the teacher ask the questions and then coloring in a happy face, a scared face, a safe face, there's different things.

What they found out from that, Representative Mushinsky was that in some instances, the self reporting was helpful, but even more important in terms of what you're trying to get a sense of the peak of this and where it's happening and where it's not is that schools found out that certain classrooms weren't safe, that they didn't know weren't safe. It turned out that there was a bully in the kindergarten, they didn't know it, whereas the fifth grade was fine.

So that implementing these pre and post questionnaires are worth their weight in gold because it's the children telling you. Now in some instances, they also have questionnaires for parents so that because the child may tell the parent. When the child's older, the child's not going to tell the parent for a long time.

We just heard about a case in Hartford of a child who was going to the bathroom in his pants all the time and the mother discovered this, went to the principal. The child admitted that he had been bullied and the principal said to the mother it was because of her divorce.

So we have a long way to go, sort of in teaching how to deal with this. But the self-reporting through questionnaire would help a school get a sense of where there was trouble. And also these questionnaires say, where is it? So you quickly find out it's in the play yard, or it's on the way to school. So I think that these pre and post questionnaires at their best are wonderful tools.

And then, I think what you have to do with the self-reporting is allow there to be a range. Maybe I tell you I'm being bullied but I'm too scared to tell you who. Maybe I tell you who it is but a well trained faculty would give me that opportunity to tell you or not, so long as I'm telling you

something.

The big problem we have is that most schools, most teachers, have no idea how to respond and so they expel the bully and then the bully beats up the kid. That's why it has to be whole school and everybody has to be trained, including the parents so that there's an understanding that everybody's going to change this because we want schools to be safe.

And also, the bully isn't just the bad kid. I mean, the bully needs help. So from a juvenile justice vantage point, intervening with the bully in a preventative framework before third grade and yes, you could pick it up, would be incredibly helpful.

It would reduce felon; it would reduce illegal activity, an aggressive activity on the part of some child that we haven't helped. And a lot of these kids want help.

I sat in the northwestern part of the state next to a bully in a meeting. It was group of kids. Two other adults were there with myself, and the kid said, yeah, I'm a bully. My father taught me to be a bully. I run his business when he's gone. And the only way I, at this age can be in control of these adults is by being mean.

Now this kid needed help not running his father's business, you know. So helping the bully, the target and the bystander, they all need support and love.

REP. MUSHINSKY: Representative Tercyak.

REP. TERCYAK: Just one more comment. I think that one of the places where children (inaudible-not using mike) is the dressing rooms of the physical education or the gyms, you know. (inaudible)

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: It's so accurate. Bullies are very smart and they will go where adults are not and where the most social pressure exists not to tell. They also get off at a certain point in seeing

that other people enjoy it a little bit, which is why training the children that it is actually not cool to enjoy this is important.

REP. TERCYAK: Thank you.

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: Thank you.

REP. TERCYAK: (Inaudible-not using mike) Thank you so much.

REP. MUSHINSKY: Thank you, Elaine. The next speaker is Tom Gilman and then Jeanne Milstein.

DEP. COMM. THOMAS GILMAN: Good afternoon, Representative Mushinsky, Senator Williams and distinguished members of the Select Committee on Children. My name is Tom Gilman and I'm Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families.

I'm here today to speak to you on two bills on your agenda. The first bill I would like to address is H.B. 5424 AN ACT CONCERNING CIVIL PREPAREDNESS AND THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN.

The Department of Children and Families supports the concept behind this legislation and is pleased that the Committee included the Department as a key player in the development of emergency preparedness plan for children.

But we can't say that this has not been something that we have started already. Indeed, we have to go back to September 11th and the events of that day and look at the part that the Department and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services provided.

At the Governor's direction, more than 26 members of our staffs provided hours at Metro North stations, talking with families, talking with people about their families and their children, trying to give them information as to how their emotional needs might be met.

We contacted our 25 child guidance clinics

often have little choice but to keep a child in detention. How is it possible that we can tolerate such treatment of children whose actions tell us that they need help. We recognize that even in the title we use. Children from families with service needs. And yet, we allow the system to treat them as criminals.

I ask the Committee to support a new way of responding to these children. First and foremost, we cannot allow them to be detained or incarcerated. They do not belong in detention centers or Long Lane School or the Connecticut Juvenile Training School and I look forward to working with all of you members of the Department of Children and Families, Judicial and other advocates so we can develop these alternatives.

I would also suggest a couple of changes in the proposed bill. There's an inconsistency in the bill. I think it was probably a drafting error, since the current law allows a child to be held in detention prior to a hearing on a petition for up to 72 hours, excluding Saturday, Sunday and holidays but the proposed bill prohibits placement of families with service needs children in a juvenile detention center so that needs to be clarified.

And secondly, any areas that reference Connecticut Juvenile Training School need to also reference Long Lane School.

Secondly, I support H.B. 5176 AN ACT CONCERNING YOUTH IN CRISIS. This bill clarifies that youth in crisis would also include 17 year olds as well as 16 year olds.

Finally, I support H.B. 5425 AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL REPORTING OF BULLYING BEHAVIOR. This bill is extremely important. I chair the Child Fatality Review Panel and our fatality data for the last year reveals the shocking information. Youth suicide in the State of Connecticut, and I'm talking about children from ages 11 to 18 has nearly doubled. Again, children ages 11 to 18 and the suicide rate has nearly doubled.

We've done a preliminary review of these suicides and we started to look at family structure. Family structure, single parent, two parent families, we looked at economics. The children were from poor families, they were from middle class families, they were from rich families. We looked at the geographic demographics, rural, suburban, urban.

The two factors that we have found so far, and again, it's preliminary, there are two factors amongst these children. Mental health issues and the children have been bullied.

So again, we support this bill with some of the changes that Elaine Zimmerman talked about and I would also like to see schools be responsible for not only putting in place these programs, but for measuring the effectiveness of these programs. Also to include mental health consultants in schools, training teachers and so on.

Lastly, I support H.B. 5424 AN ACT CONCERNING CIVIL PREPAREDNESS AND THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN. Thank you.

REP. MUSHINSKY: We don't have your testimony in writing and we need it.

JEANNE MILSTEIN: You will get it. I apologize.

REP. MUSHINSKY: If you have very specific language.

JEANNE MILSTEIN: Yes, you will get it by the end of the day. Thank you.

REP. MUSHINSKY: Unfortunately, we're under an extreme time deadline in this Committee. Everything has to be voted out next week, so.

JEANNE MILSTEIN: End of the day.

REP. MUSHINSKY: Thanks. Are there questions?

JEANNE MILSTEIN: Thank you.

REP. MUSHINSKY: Okay. Moving on to the public list our first witness is Al Slobodien followed by Sue

service needs.

REP. MUSHINSKY: Okay, thank you.

SHELLEY GEBALLE: We testify also in favor of H.B. 5176 AN ACT CONCERNING YOUTH IN CRISIS and then H.B. 5178 AN ACT CONCERNING CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS FOR TEACHERS. We support the general intent of the bill which is to increase teachers' understanding of child and adolescent development. But again here, we would urge that the bill be amended to incorporate another recommendation of the Children's Committee of the Mental Health Policy Council specifically that there be a requirement for teachers to obtain 15 CEUs in the area of mental health promotion and mental illness prevention and treatment.

This is not with the intent that we would create teachers, make teachers mental health clinicians but rather to provide them with the skill to identify children who may need to be referred for mental health services whether because of their aggressive behavior or their withdrawn behavior and also to give them the skills to manage classroom, particularly a classroom that has children in it that are bullying or children who have other behavioral health needs.

And finally, fourth, we testify in favor of H.B. 5425 AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL REPORTING OF BULLYING BEHAVIOR. Currently, the only reporting that's done by local school districts to the State Department of Education is about student disciplinary offenses, suspensions and expulsions.

There are other warning signs of serious mental health needs among kids. One of them is bullying and a second is excessive absences from school.

We would urge that this bill be amended also to implement a recommendation of the Mental Health Policy Council to require the reporting by school districts of truancy and also to enact a clear statutory definition of truancy.

According to Deputy Commissioner Leslie Aversa, there is no clear definition of truancy in state

law because an absence is not defined whether it's missing a full day or a part of a day nor is unexcused defined. And so there's substantial variation across school districts in what is an unexcused absence.

A second recommendation. In the report is that SDE develop a protocol that helps school districts in tracking students who are truant, including students who miss excessive school in the younger grades and requires them to report data on truancy routinely to SDE but many of the same categories of the disciplinary data are reported gender, race, ethnicity, age of child, grade of child, school and reason for truancy.

And finally, to require SDE to notify school districts that have particularly high truancy, suspension and expulsion rates, require these districts to provide SDE with either rationale to explain why the rates are high or an action plan to correct the problem which is consistent with what Elaine suggested with regard to bullying.

We also testify in favor of H.B. 5177 AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOLS AND PHYSICAL FITNESS and there's some data in my testimony about why that's important and also SDE's own recommendations about how much physical activity children should have. None of us could sit still for eight hours straight. We don't do it as adults and for kids it's really impossible.

REP. MUSHINSKY: We agree. In fact, we raised this partly because of the obesity problem and partly because of the increasing use of drugs to control kids' behavior when our gut instinct here is that they probably just need to get outside a little more.

SHELLEY GEBALLE: The Youth (inaudible) Survey of Connecticut students showed that one in four youths surveyed, it's a CDC study, doesn't have gym any time during the course of a week and apart from the issue of obesity as you probably know, related to that is a marked increase on type 2 diabetes and other types of long term health problems related to

and also to make it easier for the families to get all their needs taken care of in the same geographic location.

So, I appreciate any feedback from you on that as it may affect you directly either now or in the future.

RITA CRANA: Thanks.

REP. MUSHINSKY: Thanks. Okay. Dr. Robert Zavoski, followed by Lisa Toomey.

SEN. WILLIAMS: Is Dr. Zavoski here?

REP. MUSHINSKY: Is Dr. Zavoski here? Okay, so we have written testimony from him. Okay. Lisa Toomey followed by Doug Edwards.

LISA TOOMEY: I guess I wasn't too anxious to get up here. Forgot to hold my seat. I would first like to thank the members of the Committee and specifically Representative Mushinsky for inviting me to speak before you.

My name is Lisa Toomey and I am the founder of the Advocacy Group for Parents of Children Affected by Bullying, as well as the mother of two children, one of whom has suffered the devastating consequences of school bullying.

I am here to comment on H.B. 5425. With all due respect to the sponsors of this bill, this legislation, though conceptually a step in the right direction, appears to be searching to quantify a problem in an environment where the bullied are very hesitant to make their problems known.

In fact, in order to even imagine that a true accounting can be compiled in that environment is unrealistic. Before those who are being bullied will report their pain, a climate of security and safety must be established so that they feel that they will be protected if they make such a report. The existence of the problem at all is a clear statement that such a climate does not exist.

Research throughout the United States and globally that I might add is widely available, clearly proclaims the magnitude of the problem, both in volume and the impact on the victims and ultimately society.

And so it seems superfluous to attempt to track how often it occurs rather than to implement a requisite educational program into our schools so as to train those who populate the same classrooms and hallways where the assaults occur.

Only when a uniformed implementation of a multi-level anti-bullying program, inclusive of girls, boys, and full staff, including maintenance, cafeteria and transportation, anonymous self-reports which should be evaluated by a third party and results made public, will we be able to truly see a change and accurate measure of the seemingly social acceptance of this behavior.

In light of the well established, ever increasing data revealing the seriousness and devastation that already exists, I would please ask for an explanation of the reasons why you have chosen the gathering of more statistics over an immediate course of action.

As two final points, it would behoove you to take into consideration that school nurses, despite state issued licenses which mandate standards of procedure are not required by the State Board of Education to document and file any visits of children to their offices, which very well may include physical injuries related to bullying behavior and therefore will automatically taint the reporting results you are asking the individual school districts to provide.

In no other health facility, including veterinary clinics, is documentation of an injury, sickness, etc. void except in our public school systems.

Secondly, we would respectfully invite you to attend our meeting on Tuesday, March 5th at the Wallingford Public Library at 6:30 p.m. which will

be a presentation of research facts and testimonies by parents, your constituents, of children affected by school bullying's devastation as well as children's painful accounts of what they have experienced and continue to witness on a daily basis.

And I would be happy to answer any questions. Than you.

REP. MUSHINSKY: The reason why we're going to statistics instead of the program statewide is financial. We are in a \$350 million hole this year and a \$350 million, possibly \$700 million hole next year, so adding any new programs will not get through the Appropriations Committee. It will not happen.

What I'm trying to do is gather, we start with gathering data so when we acquire funds, we can target the worst schools immediately rather than try to set up a statewide program. So that's really the reason. It's a financial reason because we do have information on the models that work but we probably couldn't pay for statewide implementation of the models.

We're going to have to target that toward the schools where there appears to be a chronic problem and as we do with academic data gathering, we target money to those schools when we know which schools they are. So that's really the reason.

We can certainly put the language in for the implementation and have it trigger later to get us past this budget hole. That might be something that we could do and then it would come into play as the money comes back.

LISA TOOMEY: I think what really concerns me and the people I represent is that you're not going to get a clear picture. You're not going to get the real number by asking the schools, you know, to do this in a formal way. It's just, it's already been known globally that that will not happen.

REP. MUSHINSKY: Did you hear the other testimony on

Commission Children?

LISA TOOMEY: Yes, I did.

REP. MUSHINSKY: Because they said, with pre and post questionnaires where you can pick up some data.

LISA TOOMEY: The only problem with is that, you're not including staff, and staff, unfortunately, from what we've heard from many numerous callers, being teachers, they are gagged to speak.

REP. MUSHINSKY: Staff are gagged?

LISA TOOMEY: They are gagged to speak of the incidents that occur in their schools. And so, you're really not going to get a real picture from staff and certainly, you're not going to get it, you're not even actually asking for incidents to be reported by students. You're asking for the incidents of these reports from staff. And staff are being gagged by their administrators to report these incidents.

And not only that, but 30% of administrators and teachers are bullies themselves.

REP. MUSHINSKY: Yeah, I've run into that myself. I teach part-time and I have run into that myself where the teachers are occasionally the bullies.

LISA TOOMEY: So actually, I think it's a pretty ineffective way of gathering the real information and if there would be some way that you can incorporate a full body, including students anonymous report, it would be much more of an incentive for a bullied victim to come forward. Because I really feel that you won't get the real perspective on the problems.

REP. MUSHINSKY: Okay. We should look at that, too, the anonymous reporting.

LISA TOOMEY: And I don't think that would be so expensive that it couldn't be done.

REP. MUSHINSKY: I agree. That could probably be done

cheaply. But we'd like to have some required reporting on the basis of the school, as they do now for absentees. There are certain incidents they report now and we're trying to get this in that same ballpark so that they can't weasel out of the report.

LISA TOOMEY: Unfortunately, they're not very educated as to, a lot of them are not very educated as to the specifics in this issue so therefore they would not be able to report accurately.

REP. MUSHINSKY: Well, that's another problem. We've had a difficult time writing the definition of bully, but it's got to be crystal clear to the administrators what we mean by bullying.

LISA TOOMEY: Right. And there again, their perspective would be their reality. So whether or not they think the amount of what is going on is indicative of that definition is kind of grey, without proper training.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (Inaudible)

LISA TOOMEY: Right.

REP. MUSHINSKY: Now, in Meriden, do they ever access the half a million dollars we put in the budget last year for the anti-bullying program? Are they one of the school districts that accessed it?

LISA TOOMEY: Actually, from what I understand, all of these programs seem to be patchwork programs. They seem to be very helpful from the research that I've done, but they're not full-blown school-wide classroom individual programs. They're piecemeal programs.

And I believe that, I know that Meriden listed several of those patchwork programs in the article but not specifically anti-bullying full school-wide implementation and I know that only one school even asked for, or went to a training on the DLAM. None of the other schools in Meriden did. They did not participate at all.

REP. MUSHINSKY: Okay. Well, I hope to be there on the 5th.

LISA TOOMEY: That would be wonderful. It gives a much clearer perspective, I think, to hear what's actually going on.

REP. MUSHINSKY: Yeah. And I'll bring the stuff that we have because the Committee's been collecting information too from some of the other countries and states so we can bring that material, too. I'm sure that (inaudible).

LISA TOOMEY: Excellent. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

REP. MUSHINSKY: And thanks for coming in. We want to make sure this never happens again. Okay. Doug Edwards followed by Dan Czekala.

DOUGLAS EDWARDS: Good afternoon, Senator Williams, Representative Mushinsky, Representative Willis and my friend from Manchester, Representative Thompson. I'm here on behalf of and in support of S.B. 337 AN ACT CONCERNING REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE.

My name is Doug Edwards and I am Program Director of Real Dads Forever, which is a fatherhood development program and I service three communities, Manchester, New Britain and Hartford with fatherhood programs.

The Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative and the Fatherhood Advisory Council must continue its valuable service to the residents of our state. We're becoming increasingly aware that father absence is the most significant social epidemic of our time.

A father's presence normally provides a sense of belonging, affirmation, stability and support throughout the life of a child. A continued emotional relationship between father and child from birth until forever provides a foundation for success in the child's life. And a father that loves his child will be there for his child,

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separate legislation (R.B. 5520) that would require training for municipal police officers regarding victim rights and services.

I believe the better approach to ensuring that victims receive timely and adequate notice of rights and services is to require that all crime victims receive the victim assistance card and that police professionals receive training regarding victim rights, victim services, and the importance of providing victims with the victim assistance card.

Section 1 of Raised Bill No. 334 would require police officials to distribute **additional** information to victims of domestic violence when the victim assistance card will already provide the necessary information for all crime victims. I would ask that you reconsider Section 1 and support notification to all crime victims.

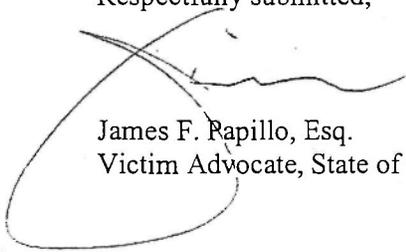
Section 2 of Raised Bill No. 334 addresses a problem many victims of domestic violence face. Once the victim of domestic violence has gained the courage to apply for a restraining order and after the subject of the restraining order has been served a copy, many times during the two-week period before the hearing, the victim is threatened and sometimes physically prevented from attending the hearing to continue the order. The confirmation requirement being proposed here would serve to further protect the most vulnerable victims of domestic violence. I strongly urge your support for subsection (a) of Section 2.

Subsection (b) of Section 2 addresses the penalty for violating a restraining order, however, I believe the intent is to address the penalty for violating a protective order as it is the violation of a protective order that constitutes a criminal offense. By requiring judges to state on the record, in open court, the reason for deciding not to sentence an offender to a term of imprisonment for violating a protective order, victims will better understand the judge's decision making regarding sentencing.

Regarding Raised Bill No. 5425, An Act Concerning School Reporting of Bullying Behavior. The Office of the Victim Advocate supports the effort to identify bullying behavior in schools with the hope of using that information to address and prevent such behavior from occurring.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully submitted,



James F. Papillo, Esq.  
Victim Advocate, State of Connecticut

families with service needs. And yet, we allow the system to treat them as criminals.

I ask the committee to support a new way of responding to these children. First and foremost, we cannot allow them to be detained or incarcerated. They do not belong in the detention centers or Long Lane School and the Connecticut Juvenile Training School. Let's work together to develop these alternatives.

I would suggest however a couple of changes to the proposed bill. There is inconsistency in this bill since the current law allows a child to be held in detention prior to a hearing on a petition for up to 72 hours excluding Saturday, Sunday & holidays. The proposed bill prohibits placement of FWSN in a juvenile detention center. Secondly, any areas that reference Connecticut Juvenile Training School should reference Long Lane School.

I support **HB 5176, "AAC Youth in Crisis"**. This bill clarifies that "youth in crisis" to include 17 year olds, as well as 16 year olds.

Finally, I support **HB 5425, "AAC School Reporting of Bullying Behavior."** This bill is extremely important. As you are aware, I chair the Child Fatality Review Panel. Our fatality data for the last year reveals shocking information. Youth suicide has almost doubled. We are talking about children ages 11-18. Preliminary information shows that the two common factors shared by these children are mental health issues and being bullied.

This bill expands the reporting requirement to incidents of bullying and assisting boards of education in identifying bullying behavior. I would, however, like to suggest some changes to this proposal; first, broaden the bill to provide the State Department of Education with additional information essential to helping school districts identify and appropriately intervene with children with mental health needs. Secondly, clearly define "bullying" in order to have consistent reporting. If there is not a consistent definition, my concern is that the definition of bullying will be minimized and therefore schools will not report incidences of bullying. Finally, schools need to track intervention strategies and outcomes of programs that are implemented. Early detection and early intervention is one of the most effective ways of preventing some of these suicides. These strategies involve implementation of researched based anti-bullying programs, housing, mental health and training for teachers in schools.

I also support **HB 5424, "AAC Civil Preparedness and the Needs of Children."** It is so critical after September 11 to put in place any measures that

5. **HB 5425, AAC School Reporting of Bullying Behavior.** Both the report of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Mental Health and the first annual report of the Children's Committee of the Mental Health Policy Council, identify schools as key to the early identification of children and youth with mental health needs. Among the student behaviors that can signal underlying mental health need to school personnel are those severe enough to trigger suspensions and expulsions, those less extreme behaviors that might be characterized as bullying (and the attendant mental health need among those who are the bullied), and excessive absences from school. In particular, excessive absences from school are one exceedingly consistent early warning sign for children. Indeed, they are in many cases the very first warning sign for a child, and therefore can present the first opportunity for a well-targeted therapeutic intervention. In addition, a school's failure to intervene therapeutically when a child is excessively absent is itself an early warning sign about that school and that school district.

Currently, however, school districts only report to the State Department of Education data about student disciplinary offenses, defined to be all incidents leading to suspension or expulsion, or any incident involving alcohol, drugs, or weapons. School districts complete the State Department of Education's Form ED166 and forward the data (either in paper form, or on an Excel spreadsheet) to SDE. Data include the age, gender, race/ethnicity, grade, type of offense, number of offenses, type of weapon reported if any, ERG, and whether the student is a special education student or not.

This bill would extend the reporting requirement to incidents of bullying, and directs SDE to "assist boards of education in identifying bullying behavior" for purposes of this requirement.

ACCY believes that this bill should be broadened to provide SDE with additional information so essential to helping school districts identify and appropriately intervene with children with mental health needs. Specifically, ACCY urges this Committee to incorporate in this bill language to implement the following recommendations of the Children's Committee of the Mental Health Policy Council:

- Enact a clear statutory definition of "truancy," by amending CGS §10-198a(a) to assure consistency across school districts. NOTE: CGS §10-198a(a) defines a "truant" child to be "a child age five to eighteen, inclusive, who is enrolled in a public or private school and has four unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten unexcused absences from school in any year." The statute, however, does not define "unexcused" absence leading to conflicting definitions across schools districts regarding both what is an absence (e.g., is it missing a full day only, is missing most of a day, or is it missing any part of a day) and also what absences are "unexcused." A clear, uniform definition of "truancy" is essential.
- Require SDE to adopt a protocol that assists school districts in tracking students who are truant and that requires school districts to report data on truancy routinely to SDE by relevant category (e.g., by gender, race/ethnicity, age of child, grade of child, school, and reason for truancy).
- Require SDE to notify school districts that have particularly high truancy, suspension and expulsion rates and require these districts to provide to SDE either a rationale to explain why the rates are high in a manner satisfactory to SDE, or an action plan to correct the problem.



Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc.

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**Testimony  
Before  
The Select Committee On Children**

On

**H.B. 5177, An Act Concerning Schools and Physical Activity For Children**

**H.B. 5178, An Act Concerning Child Development And Continuing Education Credits For Teachers**

**H.B. 5424, An Act Concerning Civil Preparedness And The Needs Of Children**

**H.B. 5425, An Act Concerning School Reporting Of Bullying Behavior**

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) is concerned that these bills before you today address issues which do not require legislative action. Specifically:

- The mandate contained in **H.B. 5177, An Act Concerning Schools and Physical Activity For Children**, that children in grades K-8 have either physical education or recess every school day has a potential to wreck havoc with middle school scheduling. Many of our middle schools, which typically comprise grades 6-8, utilize a modified block scheduling format under which physical education can be offered for a longer period of time, but not on a daily basis. We urge you to continue to allow local school districts to make these scheduling decisions.
- **H.B. 5178, An Act Concerning Child Development And Continuing Education Credits For Teachers**, would impose the requirement that 15 hours of the 90 hours of continuing education units for all teachers every 5 years be in the area of child and youth development. This requirement would further restrict the flexibility that school districts and their staff need to provide training in a variety of areas through the professional development program. It also appears excessive for educators to be required to repeat programs which they may have recently completed in college.
- **H.B. 5424, An Act Concerning Civil Preparedness And The Needs Of Children**, would establish a mandate that school district safety committees develop a crisis response plan. We want to make you aware that CABE has developed a Model Administrator's Emergency Response and Crisis Management Manual which we have made available to all Connecticut school districts to help them address these issues.
- **H.B. 5425, An Act Concerning School Reporting Of Bullying Behavior**, creates an additional and unnecessary reporting requirement, which will be exacerbated by the difficulty defining "bullying." As an alternative, we urge you to support the ongoing efforts of districts to utilize a variety of prevention programs to reduce bullying.

For example, one school played the news on the public announcement system throughout the day on the unfolding terrorism at the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Then a school lockdown occurred with all children in the gymnasium. A child went to a counselor that evening, terrified of war; another came to school the next day throwing up in the car as she got closer to the school building. She had begun to fear the school itself.

Our teachers were not trained in the psychological symptoms that might manifest themselves. For example, on September 12, a parent received a letter saying her child was disruptive – she wouldn't stop talking all day. When the father asked what the problem was, his daughter said she was afraid that if she stopped talking she would see the images of the explosion again and again and not be able to stop them. She had begun to fear silence.

Some communications messages were dramatically uneven. In some schools, the issue was discussed. In other schools, teachers were told they were not allowed to talk about terrorism.

A case of a comprehensive response was in Greenwich at Parkway school where their emergency school team addressed communications, psychological needs, assessment, intervention and evacuation plans. Children were helped to immediately contribute to the crisis. They made lunches for the firemen sifting through the wreckage and wrote notes in each lunch beginning with "Dear Hero." They had the assignment of writing letters to one of three groups— 1) the heroes; 2) the families who were missing someone; or 3) the terrorists who hit the building. They planted trees, painted wreaths for those who died and created rituals for the children.

H.B. 5424 offers a policy response to the very specific needs of children in homeland security. It addresses health, training, school safety, mental health, after school, and civic engagement for children and youth. Under the bill, agencies would coordinate for youth while preparing and thinking ahead for safety and public engagement.

This is the first such bill in the nation. It is being used by Senator Dodd with a team of bipartisan Congressional leaders concerned that children are not in the preparedness equation. Help Connecticut ensure the protection and involvement of children.

I would make the following technical recommendations regarding H.B. 5424. First, Section 1 of the bill should require the commissioners' plan to be developed in consultation with the Connecticut Office of Emergency Management and other appropriate state agencies and entities that are expert in children and terrorism. Second, the bill should seek to increase child and youth exposure and training in cultural diversity and global connectedness.

Support H.B. 5425: An Act Concerning School Reporting of Bullying Behavior

What once seemed like a classic school fight in the schoolyard during class break is now often an early sign of later aggression. The most recent death of the young boy in Meriden and the near death of a female student in West Haven should stand as memorials and warning signs to us.

We have allowed aggression, and cruelty towards difference to go too far. Children mirror what they see in adults and what adults permit. The only common variable among the school shootings across this nation was that of bullying.

Bullying is a red flag to later aggressive behavior. In fact, children who are bullies in the early years often have criminal records by their thirties. We ignore the bully, but now we are seeing the impact of bullying on the target. The target ends up depressed, isolated and fearful of school. He or she often takes anger out, over time on himself or others. The bully, if not helped, ends up out of school and in jail.

Children are capable of aggression if not supported with environments that teach respect, caring and communication. In fact, young children commit crimes. Almost 11 percent of the 25,632 youngsters arrested in Connecticut were 12 years old or younger, with one in five charged with assault.

Parents are also deeply concerned. In a recent Yankelovitch poll in our state's Social Health Index, 55 percent worried about their "child picking up attitudes or behaviors that go against their values." Forty-five (45) percent worried about their "child being safe in school." Forty-one (41) percent worried about students bullying other students.

Connecticut passed the Safe Learning Act last year which began to address bullying. A private donor matched the state and put up one half million dollars. Grants are being awarded next week, after a successful competitive grant process.

But there is no new money in the state for the Safe Learning Act even though the private donor will continue to match, dollar for dollar, to stop bullying in Connecticut. And though we have begun to take action to ensure that such violence never occurs in our state, it has now taken its toll. We should learn from this young suicide of a very able and intelligent child and take prompt action.

A report was written for the Governor and Commissioner Sergi offering best practices and the necessary components to undo aggression in schools. I have enclosed this report in your packets.

As Co-Chair of the Bullying Task Force and author of the text, I offer a few suggestions regarding H.B.5425. Asking schools to report on incidents of bullying will not take the actions needed far enough. There is the risk that schools will redefine bullying, to minimize the number of incidences. School administrators are often quite nervous about the incidences of bullying.

Bullying can kill. It needs intervention. We will lose too much time with just a census, and we risk having schools fighting over shades of definition to protect themselves.

However, the idea in this bill of having schools be accountable in some way through reportage is wonderful. Why not ask schools to report each year on what they are doing to reduce aggression, what programs they are using? This offers the expectation of systemic intervention, analysis and measurement of outcomes. Within that context, you might ask them to report on the number of

incidents of hazing, bullying and other specified aggressive acts and to report on whether they have gone up or down resulting from their selected interventions for their schools.

This offers the state Department of Education an opportunity to actually assess outcomes and does not just ask for a number but what a school is doing about the number of incidences of bullying.

Additionally, the \$500,000 for the Safe Learning Act should be put back in the budget again to keep the private match going and to offer more than a cluster of schools opportunity for interventions.

Curriculum in bullying reduction is not costly and the good programs are research-based. Recently in a program sponsored by the Hasbro Foundation, bullying was reduced by 35 percent in two years and teacher intervention increased by 100 percent. In the Olweus model, begun in Norway and Sweden because of increases in youth suicide resulting from bullying, aggression decreased by 50 percent in just two years. The successful programs are whole school models. Everyone is trained to stop bullying — the janitor, the playground assistant, teachers, parents and children.

We have models, and we know which ones work. We just haven't yet expressed the political will to stop this by offering schools the resources and expectation that they should methodically change school culture and intervene.

As you reference a definition of bullying, I offer the international definition of bullying for your use: "A person is being bullied when he or she is the target, repeatedly and over time, of negative actions undertaken by one or several other individuals who are more powerful than the target in some way. Negative actions, which can begin with name calling, or social isolation and can build to actual attacks and/or attempts to injure or humiliate another person, include physical and verbal aggression, social alienation, intimidation, racial and ethnic harassment and sexual harassment. Bullying not only hurts the bully and the target, it also impacts the overall school climate and learning environment. Bullying is a form of repetitive and ongoing harassment, which crosscuts geographic, race and socio-economic segments of society." (Bullying Task Force (Governor's Prevention Partnership, Commission on Children & State Department of Education), *Brave Enough to Be Kind*, updated January 2002, p. 3).

Violence is learned and preventable. Researchers consistently link youth violence to a lack of social problem-solving skills. Parents and school leaders should not ignore this.

Children need to learn how to work together respectfully with caring. As our state's recent Bullying Task Force said, children need to be "Brave Enough To Be Kind." The report cites key action steps. They include instituting research-based anti-bully programs in the early and middle grades; training for teachers, parents and students in creating and sustaining safe school environments; primary prevention policies adopted by school boards, and the utilization of health and mental health professionals for consultation and team partnerships.

Connecticut should build safe environments with the proper tools for children and teachers to make learning safe. In the new context of September 11, schools must be safe hubs in the community for learning. A core tenet in a democracy is safety. If children are not safe, they cannot learn or be free.

**Support S.B. 335: An Act Concerning the Placement of Children**

The Commission is a member of The Working Group on Prison Issues and serves on the sub-committee for children of incarcerated adults. The bill before you would provide for more service options for youth in communities instead of placement in the Connecticut Juvenile Training School. It will also allow for treatment and intervention that may help prevent the development of more serious and delinquent behaviors that lead to more serious criminal activity.

**Support S.B. 337: An Act Concerning Review and Recommendations on the Fatherhood Initiative**

The Fatherhood Initiative in Connecticut, under the leadership of DSS Commissioner Patricia Wilson-Coker, seeks to promote the positive relationship of fathers with their children. The Initiative has successfully brought together all branches of government, community groups, child advocates, clergy and broad based private/public stakeholders to review all aspects of fatherhood in State policy and practice. The Commission is honored to serve on the Fatherhood Advisory Council and believes strongly in the importance of this initiative for Connecticut families. The bill before you requires the Fatherhood Initiative to report to the General Assembly and make recommendations. One change would be to say report ANNUALLY, to provide ongoing information. This would assist in raising awareness of fatherhood issues and help to identify barriers and make policy recommendations in an ongoing format.

**Support H.B. 5176: An Act Concerning Youth in Crisis**

The bill seeks to clarify that 16 and 17 year olds are to be included in the Youth in Crisis definition and eligible to receive much-needed intervention services. Under the leadership of this Committee, Connecticut passed Public Act No. 00-177, An Act Concerning Youth in Crisis. The bill permits the Juvenile Court to assume jurisdiction over 16 and 17 year olds who are beyond their parent's control, run away from home, or fail to go to school. This jurisdiction would be similar to that for children age 15 and younger under the current families with service needs (FWSN) law. The bill is necessary to ensure that both 16 and 17 year olds become eligible for services, especially at a time when the prison population for Mason Youth Correctional Facility for this age group is the fastest growing prison population.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on these important issues.

## Front Page

**No rest for targets of bullying at school**HR 5425

Joe McGurk, Register Staff

February 24, 2002

**On one Sunday in January, 9-year-old Candice was trying to calm down in the emergency room.**

How to fight back

**Overcome by intense anxiety from taunts and jeers she knew she would face at her East Haven elementary school Monday morning, she tried to kill herself by jumping from her second-story bedroom window.**

Her mother, Tina, who asked that the family's last name not be published, said Candice has only been back to school a few days since. And each day ended the same — bullies teased her to the point of despair.

Searching for a home tutor, Tina said she will face the consequences of keeping her daughter out of school, but for now, "she's not going back. I'm not burying my 9-year-old."

Despite state efforts to reduce bullying incidents, some parent groups say the problem continues to go unchecked. An East Haven woman said last week she went to the East Haven Board of Education seeking help in stopping bullies from targeting her 11-year-old son at school.

Tina said she tried many ways to protect her daughter from bullying in the lunchroom. She asked local and state school officials to intervene. She picked up her daughter at lunch to keep her out of the cafeteria. But she says nothing has worked. The bullies still find Candice, as they have for the last two years.

"No one wants to help me anymore, but other parents need to know they're not the only ones," Tina said.

Many parents see bullying as a pervasive problem and believe the only way to help their children is to keep them out of school, Tina said.

Education leaders across the country say that putting a halt to bullying is a top priority since the deadly shooting at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo., in 1999.

Authorities believe bullying may have led two students on a school shooting spree that left 15 dead.

Anti-bullying programs have been launched in cities and towns nationwide. In Connecticut, many state and local programs are available to help bullied children.

But parents say those programs are disjointed, hard to find and often useless, and children continue to ridicule, humiliate and physically attack their classmates.

"Bullying is a huge problem," said Michael Schwarzchild, a Bridgewater-based clinical psychologist who started an advocacy relations firm, Michaels Group. He said his goal is to provide the one piece that's been missing in efforts to control bullying: organization.

"You'll always hear there's no assistance available," he said.

"Right now bullying prevention is at its earliest stages. There's a lot of interest, but some school systems won't touch this, while some embrace the dialogue and very few approach it comprehensively." Another problem, he said, is that adult decision-makers often forget the pain and anguish of being a bully's victim. For some children, the experience changes the course of their lives.

"There's nothing quite as tragic as meeting a 40-year-old whose life was destroyed by what happened on the schoolyard in middle school," he said.

Ivette Ruiz, the mother who complained to the East Haven Board of Education, said her son goes to the same school as Tina's daughter.

She said that after her son faced daily beatings and name calling, she asked school officials for help.

Board of Education officials said they are looking into the complaint, but said the incidents occurred off school grounds and the school system may not have jurisdiction.

Meriden parent Lisa Toomey calls it an ignored epidemic, nothing short of "bullycide."

"There's a lack of responsibility, training and implementation of the research that has been done on bullying," said Toomey, who has formed an advocacy group for parents of bullied children.

Only two people came to the group's first meeting last week.

And they were not lawmakers, town officials or distraught parents who were invited.

Meriden resident Laura Tiezzi said she came because she knows the pain of being a bully's victim.

"I was bullied as a child, throughout elementary, middle and high school, and I didn't do anything about it. There was nowhere to turn," she said.

"The kids still don't have anywhere to turn," said Toomey.

Together with co-organizer Nancy Gettner, she had hoped to fill a room with parents and influential people who would back a petition that demands school boards adopt a uniform policy on bullying.

"The only way we can make this happen is to do it town by town, where they are making their own rules, and kids are still being driven to suicide," Toomey said. "There needs to be awareness. We want to let kids know we care about them."

Toomey was inspired to action after bullying pushed Daniel Scruggs over the edge.

Toomey has collected a wealth of information on bullying tragedies, including news clippings of Daniel's story. The articles detail how he was small when the bullying began, and how the blond-haired boy didn't get much larger through middle school. That's why bullies preyed on the 12-year-old up until the day in January 2001 when he hanged himself.

After days of bullying at a Meriden Middle School, Daniel was found hanging in a closet of his home.

State offices including the state Department of Children and families, friends and the local Board of Education are investigating and second-guessing whether they did enough to help Daniel.

"Bullying takes place in every environment. Everyone should be doing something about it," said Cate Bourke, program coordinator for the Governor's Prevention Partnership's Safe Schools and Communities Coalition. "But not all schools have bully prevention programs."

The state's most recent effort to reduce school violence was a bill passed last year that set aside \$500,000 to fund anti-school violence campaigns. The money was to be matched by private contributions.

Within the next few weeks, towns that applied for some of that money will know if they will get a Safe Learning grant.

Bourke said the money should help schools create programs that within two years could reduce school violence by half. That would be significant, she said, since the coalition's research has found that 80 to 90 percent of students have at one time been the targets of bullying.

Most of the anti-bullying programs that schools are developing are loosely based on Norwegian scholar Dr. Dan Olweus research on bullying and anti-social behavior. Some 20 years ago he began showing that victims are generally smaller and weaker than bullies and are often anxious, nervous and needy.

That build up of anger is often too much for young children to bear.

Most anti-bullying programs require all children and adults, from teachers to cafeteria aides, to be trained to recognize bullying.

And they combat bullying on three fronts: the classroom, the whole school and the individual person.

But not all schools have distinct bullying programs. Bourke said the state's anti-bullying task force has trained educators from about 100 schools.

The state is now focusing on educating school psychologists to help them work more effectively with children to reduce the long-term psychological effects of bullying.

There aren't enough hours in the school day for teachers to worry about test scores and running anti-bullying programs, said Dr. Paula Gill Lopez, director of the child psychology department at Fairfield University.

While stopping bullying has never been so high on the nation's priority list, "to attack the problem piecemeal, the way they are doing it, is not as effective as taking a whole-school approach," she said.

"Programs need to be a part of daily curriculums."

She said kids aren't the only ones who need help. She said parents need to "create the atmosphere that bullying is wrong, where kids care about each other."

Toomey said most schools' bullying prevention programs end up being posters on a classroom wall whose catchy slogans just blend into the school surroundings.

Toomey, who is planning another advocacy group meeting March 5 at the Wallingford Public Library from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., said she doesn't understand why Connecticut is following suit with states like Colorado. By the end of this year, every school in that state must have a program in place to reduce bullying.

"We can't let these kids think that they have to go to school and they have to take this," Toomey said. "We have to change the school climate, help change the silent majority. There are many more Daniel Scruggs out there."

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# THE CONNECTICUT PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

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February 28, 2002

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Representative Mary M. Mushinsky, Co-Chair  
Committee Members, Select Committee on Children  
Connecticut General Assembly  
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Support for Raised House Bill 5425, An Act Concerning School Reporting of Bullying Behavior

Senator Williams, Representative Mushinsky, and distinguished members of the Select Committee on Children:

I am writing to you in support of H.B. No. 5425 (Raised), An Act Concerning School Reporting of Bullying Behavior. The Connecticut Psychological Association, through its Children and Youth Committee, appreciates the Legislature's attention to the problem of school bullying. This bill will surely increase the attention being paid to bullying statewide. There can be no doubt that the provision of information to parents regarding pupil behavior and discipline is a necessary first step in addressing the problem. The collection of statistical information, likewise, will be beneficial in planning future interventions. The vast majority of bullying instances, however, never reach the attention of school personnel or parents. These statistics will generally understate the true occurrence of the problem. Further, the question of what actually constitutes bullying behavior must be clearly defined to allow for meaningful data collection.

We would like to make several recommendations in these regards. First, for the purposes of data collection, the definition of bullying might be that which was provided in *Brave Enough to Be Kind*, the report of the Governor's Prevention Partnership Bullying Task Force:

A person is being bullied when he or she is the target, repeatedly and over time, of negative actions undertaken by one or several other individuals who are more powerful than the target in some way. Negative actions, which can begin with name calling, or social isolation and can build to actual attacks and/or attempts to injure or humiliate another person, include physical and verbal aggression, social alienation, intimidation, racial and ethnic harassment and sexual harassment.

Second, since this bill will result in data being collected from all of Connecticut's schools, it might also be beneficial to have each school board report annually on the resources it has available for the prevention and control of bullying. This

(OVER)

information would be invaluable in determining the progress of anti-bullying efforts throughout the state. Lastly, we support the re-funding of the Safe Learning Act, which provides for the establishment of model programs to address school bullying.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Michael Schwarzschild, Ph.D. in cursive script.

Michael Schwarzschild, Ph.D.  
President

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**State of Connecticut**  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
 STATE CAPITOL  
 HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

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**HOUSE CHAIR**

SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN  
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 BONDING SUB-COMMITTEE

**Testimony of Representative Mary Mushinsky regarding Raised Bill 5425 AAC School Reporting of Bullying Behavior**

Select Committee On Children  
 February 28, 2002

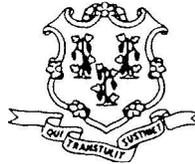
This bill came about as a result of the suicide of an 11 year-old Meriden boy due to constant bullying by his peers at school. This boy is not alone in his experiences or reactions to bullying. An East Haven girl shortly after tried to kill herself because of all of the bullying she had endured for the past two years. Despite efforts by her mother to get the East Haven Board of Education to help, the school has been non-responsive in helping to eliminate this problem, and the mother has since taken her child out of school.

This bill is important because it is designed to give kids protection so that they can concentrate on their studies in a safe environment. In some schools bullying prevention is embraced, but in other schools officials won't touch it, and so the problem continues. We need to know which schools are having success and which schools are having problems with bullying. We also need to know why some schools have less incidents of bullying than others and what programs or tactics they are using to successfully reduce bullying in their schools.

The effects of bullying both for the victim and the bully can be seen throughout adulthood. We need to make sure that the tragedy of what happened to the young boy in Meriden and what almost happened to the young girl in East Haven do not happen to any more children.

000438

State of Connecticut  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



COMMISSION ON CHILDREN

# **FACTS ON BULLYING AND BULLYING INTERVENTIONS**

**Prepared by the  
Connecticut Commission on Children**

18-20 Trinity Street \* Hartford, Connecticut 06106 \* Phone: (860) 240-0290 \* Fax: (860) 240-0248 \* Internet: [coc@po.state.ct.us](mailto:coc@po.state.ct.us)

Printed on recycled paper

## **Rationale:**

Every child has the right to be safe while learning at school.

## **Facts:**

- The U.S. Department of Justice has selected the best programs in the United States to decrease violence among youth. Criteria were based on program results, long term gains, and replicability. Anti-bullying was selected as one of the top ten programs and was the only program of non-US origin. 50 programs were reviewed. Most of the programs had no documented effects or had not been adequately evaluated.
- The links between bullying at school and other violent behaviors as well as later delinquent and criminal activity have been established. School interventions in bullying are an anti-violence prevention strategy.
- Studies in several countries have consistently shown that least 15% of student in schools are involved in bullying. About 9% are victims. In the U.S., recent studies show that up to 29% of the children are involved as: bullies (13%), targets (10%), or both (6%).
- Recent youth shootings in schools in the US have shown a pattern of the children having been bullied themselves.
- Bullies tend to become aggressive adults who stand a much higher chance than average of obtaining multiple criminal convictions.
- Children who are witness to bullying are also negatively affected. Bullying can cause anxiety and fear in bystanders.
- Bullying hurts the learning environment. A sense of lack of safety and protection is imparted and effects schoolwork.
- Bullying was reduced by 50% in Norway after a two-year school-wide school-based program was established and implemented. Teachers reported improved order and discipline, more positive social relationships, greater school satisfaction on the part of students and reduced vandalism.
- Anti-bullying strategies in schools have shown long-term decreases in rates in truancy, vandalism and theft as well as improvements in school climate.

## **Definition of Bullying**

A child is bullied when one or more children expose him or her repeatedly and over time to physical or verbal abuse. The attacks or assaults need not necessarily be direct but may take a less visible and indirect form such as social isolation and exclusions from the group. Bullying knows no boundaries of age, sex or background.

## Possible Signs of Bullying

Children may:

- Be frightened of walking to or from school
- Be unwilling to go to school
- Beg a parent to drive them to school
- Begin doing poorly in their schoolwork
- Come home regularly with books or clothes destroyed
- Become withdrawn, start stammering
- Become distressed, stop eating
- Cry themselves to sleep
- Have nightmares and even call out "leave me alone"
- Have unexplained bruises, scratches, cut
- Have their possession disappear
- Refuse to say what is wrong
- Constantly complain of headaches or seem anxious
- Give improbable excuses to explain any of the above.

Critical Measures in anti-bullying programs are:

- Awareness and involvement on the part of adults, with regard to bully-victim problems
- A survey of bully/victim problems at the start of the implementation
- Consistent and immediate consequences for aggressive behavior
- Specific class rules about bullying
- Class meetings about bullying
- Serious individual talks with bullies and with victims
- Serious talks with parents of bullies and with victims
- A meeting of the school parent-teacher organization on the topic of bullying
- A school day devoted to bully victim problems.
- Development of a class code of conduct

## Models of Intervention

Schoolwide Intervention-

- A survey is done of bullying at each school with increased supervision, school-wide assemblies, teacher in-service training to raise awareness of children and school staff regarding bullying.

Classroom level interventions-

- Establishment of classroom rules against bullying, regular class meetings to discuss bullying at school and meetings with all parents.

Individual level interventions-

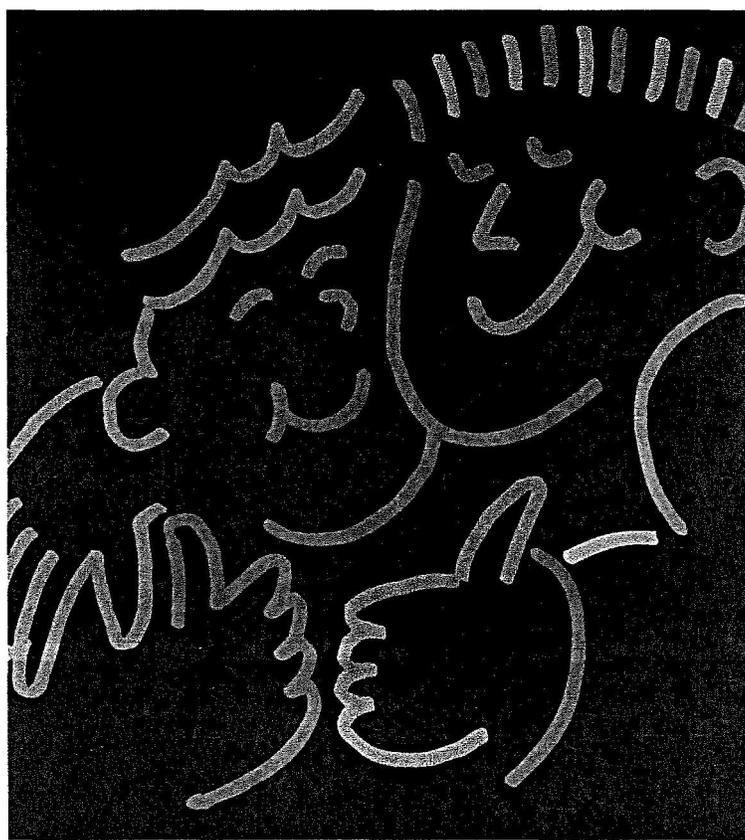
- Discussions with students identified as bullies and victims



BULLYING TASK FORCE

Updated, JANUARY 2002

# BRAVE ENOUGH



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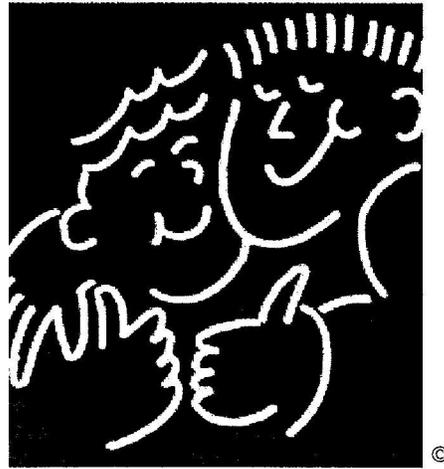
# TO BE KIND

THE GOVERNOR'S PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP

COMMISSION ON CHILDREN

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

BRAVE ENOUGH



TO BE KIND

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THE CHARGE:

TO DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEGISLATORS, SCHOOLS,  
POLICE, PARENTS, YOUTH AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES,  
TO REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF BULLYING AND RELATED BEHAVIORS IN  
CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES, WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF A  
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK THAT RECOGNIZES  
CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO LEARN WITHIN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT.

BRAVE ENOUGH



TO BE KIND

## Bullying Task Force Report

### SECTION I: THE PROBLEM

#### The Right to Learn in Safety---A Civic Principle

Learning without fear should be a basic democratic tenet. All school activity should be carried out in accordance with the fundamental values of respect, tolerance and safety. The school has the important task of imparting and instilling in pupils those values on which society is based ---individual freedom and integrity, equity, tolerance and responsibility.

The students and adults of Connecticut want safe, caring communities and schools with an environment of nurturance, high expectation and intellectual challenge. The crucial task of educational exploration should be inviting and supportive. Yet, some students hold a silent fear of formal learning environments.

#### A Silent Fear

Children worry about their capacity to learn due to learning style differences; others face language barriers. Some students have difficulty mastering different stages of literacy. Many have problems at home. But there is a different fear among some in the schoolyard which is hidden and brutal. This fear is one of not being safe.

Aggression and disrespect in community always trespass the norms of safety. Yet, work and family stress, shifts in cultural values, a decrease in adult role models for children, as well as violent mass media have unintentionally spiraled into an intractable sense of insecurity for some children.

STUDENT  
QUOTES  
From the Task  
Force Focus  
Groups

*"Bullies will  
follow you to  
the end of the  
earth just to  
pick on you."*

### The Mirror of Aggression

A community's or a family's manifestation of aggression is often mirrored in the schoolhouse. Though the shape of aggression is often mirrored in the schoolhouse. Though the shape of aggression takes many forms, children learn to model what they perceive as normative among adults. Some children are expressing concerns about their safety in the schoolyard, bus, or classroom because other children are verbally harassing, socially isolating, or physically hurting their peers. Student bystanders often feel nervous over inaction. Teachers may intervene, but sometimes lack the skills-set to be sure that their steps will stop reoccurrence.

"There's nothing you can do to make them stop."

This pattern of aggression, whether the form is small or large, creates fear in children. A safe learning environment is inviolable. Education leaders and families together seek to create a non-violent culture with respect and dignity for every child at home and in school. Parents and teachers together want a return to civil society where aggression is prevented in all its forms.

### Youth Aggression in Contemporary Society

The scope of aggression children and youth face is reflected in:

- Sixteen percent, or 25,632 Connecticut arrests, involve young people 18 years or younger. Of this total, nearly 6,000 children were arrested for serious crimes. This is higher than the national average.
- Younger children commit crimes. Almost 11 percent of the 25,632 youngsters arrested in Connecticut were 12 years old or younger, with one in five charged with assault.
- School vandalism is cited as a prevalent problem by 74 percent of state school districts.
- School suspensions and expulsions are rising. In 1998-99, 458 offenses were reported for kindergartens and 1,456 were reported for first graders.
- Young people continue to account for a disproportionate number of murder victims and perpetrators.
- Suicide remains the fourth leading cause of death among young people in Connecticut. The suicide rate among youth, ages 15-24, increased 25 percent between 1970 and 1998.

"I was bullied for being overweight. The names don't bother me anymore because I'm used to it."

*Data from Police 1999 Crime Report and State Dept. of Education  
Jeffrey Daniels, Analyst*

### Parents Are Concerned

Parents expect the school to be a place where children learn in a safe environment. They expect schools to be "caring communities." These expectations are based on the core civic principle of freedom from violence as a citizenry. Safety and security are important indicators of social health.

Among parents with children in grades K-12, according to the latest *Social State of Connecticut* report:

- Fifty five percent worry about their "child picking up attitudes or behaviors that go against their values."
- Forty five percent worry about their "child being safe in school."
- Forty one percent worry about students bullying other students.

### The Importance of Focusing on the Whole School Climate

Violence prevention and anti-bullying models which focus on the whole school reap the fullest gains. By creating a safe and secure school environment, adults enrich the lives of all students, fostering both personal growth and academic learning. Whole school models develop and maintain an environment in which attention is given to the social and ethical development of students, as well as to academic standards, in order to create effective learning conditions for every student to succeed. Moral, ethical and legal conduct is emphasized within a balance of individual rights and the common good, stressing responsibility, integrity, citizenship and a sense of community.

*"The teacher just gives the bully a detention, but it doesn't help. Detention doesn't stop it."*

Programs that focus on an overall positive school climate focus on: 1) the development of students' sense of self worth and acceptance; 2) student safety; 3) mutual trust; 4) positive interactions between staff and students; 5) value for individual differences; 6) a sense of caring among individuals, and 6) a collective sense of responsibility for student success. The school staff, in such an environment, possesses an in-depth knowledge of all students resulting in a comfortable and challenging classroom environment in which every student feels empowered.

### What Is Bullying and Why Is It a Problem?

Bullying is a common and potentially harmful form of violence among children that occurs in both school and community settings. Bullying among primary school children has been identified as one precursor to more aggressive and sometimes violent behavior in later grades. The prevalence of bullying and the seriousness of its outcomes are significantly underestimated by many children and adults.

### Definition of Bullying

A person is being bullied when he or she is the target, repeatedly and over time, of negative actions undertaken by one or several other individuals who are more powerful than the target in some way. Negative actions, which can begin with name calling, or social isolation and can build to actual attacks and/or attempts to injure or humiliate another person, include physical and verbal aggression, social alienation, intimidation, racial and ethnic harassment and sexual harassment

*"Bullying is a way to get heard."*

Bullying not only hurts the bully and the target, it also impacts the overall school climate and learning environment. Bullying is a form of repetitive and ongoing harassment, which crosscuts geographic, race and socio-economic segments of society.

Research from Australia, Canada, England, Ireland, Japan, Norway and the United States provides compelling evidence for the importance of interventions with bullying. The repeated aggressive behavior has a chilling effect on school climate and enduring effects on targets.

Outcomes for the child who is bullied can include depression, isolation, poor school attendance, and diminished grades. At the extreme, bullied children can exhibit patterns of irrational retaliation, as in some instances of recent national school shootings. Yet, studies clearly show that early identification and intervention can help the bully, the targeted child and the bystanders.

### Bullying Is More Pervasive Than Many Realize

The *Bullying in Elementary Schools in Connecticut Study* surveyed principals and teachers and found that:

- Bullying and aggression are commonly seen in elementary schools. Bullying incidents occur "sometimes" or "more often" in nearly 9 out of 10 elementary schools in the state.
- The most common types of behaviors in elementary schools are name-calling, teasing, socially isolating students, and hitting.
- The frequency of these behaviors increases from grades 1 through 5.
- More than 60 percent of teachers devote fewer than ten classroom periods per year to teaching violence prevention curricula (i.e., conflict resolution, problem solving, and stress management).
- Most elementary schools have not conducted a recent evaluation of the prevalence of aggression and bullying or the effectiveness of implemented programs to deal with these issues.

This survey was conducted by Michele Beaulieu with support from the Safe Schools and Communities Coalition of the Governor's Prevention Partnership.

### What the Research Tells Us About Bullying

Statistics regarding aggression in our nation tell a grim story with a clear message; society has a stake in changing the behavior of bullies before they become adults.

- By age twenty-four, bullies identified after the age of seven are six times more likely than non bullies to be convicted of a crime; by age 30, they are four times more likely to have accrued three criminal convictions.
- In the United States, 20-25 percent of school children are directly involved in bully-target problems.
- In one midwestern study, 20 percent of fourth through eighth graders reported academic difficulties resulting from bullying.
- Targets are far more likely to bring a weapon to school than children who are not targets. 29 percent of targets nationally have brought weapons to schools.

*"I couldn't go to the library to do research. The bullies would hurt me."*

*"It really did affect my learning. There was no one to talk to about how I could go to school the next day and deal with it.*

*Even remembering now, it's angering me so much."*

- Schools that address bullying effectively can create a more than 50 percent reduction in aggressive behaviors. These schools also see a decrease in other types of undesirable activity such as truancy, vandalism, shoplifting and underage drinking.

## Characteristics of Bullies, Targets, and Bystanders

### Bullies

The bully can be recognized most clearly by looking at character traits rather than physical attributes. The bully values aggression for the rewards it brings. He or she lacks empathy for the target and tends to lack guilt, fully believing the target deserved the attack. A bully likes to dominate. Bullies often lack specific social skills such as seeing the point of view of other people, taking responsibility for their own actions, and accepting constructive criticism. Contrary to general belief, the bully is not insecure or anxious, and does not have low self-esteem.

Parents or significant role models of bullies often model aggression. At home, punishments may be harsh and/or abusive. If not aggressive themselves, families may be permissive and tolerant of the child's aggressive behavior or inconsistent and/or unable to set clear limits.

Without intervention, bullies establish patterns of antisocial thinking. They are unlikely to feel empathy toward others, and unlikely to recognize their own pain as well. Bullies have trouble expressing anger appropriately. They are frequently in need of disciplinary action for aggression, are more likely to commit other anti-social acts such as truancy, fighting, theft, intoxication, and vandalism, and drop out of school more frequently than their peers.

Early identification and intervention can mitigate bullies negative and hostile reactions, and strengthen positive behaviors. A bully thinks in unrealistic ways, and successful interventions involve consistent enforcement of specific rules against bullying, graduated sanctions, and changing/correcting thinking errors. Neither punishment nor traditional therapy that focuses on feelings is typically effective with bullies.

### Targets

There are two types of targets: passive and provocative. Passive targets are likely to be more anxious and insecure than students in general. They lack the sophistication in social skills that would allow them to easily divert a bully's attention through humor or other strategies, and therefore yield easily to bullying. When attacked, they commonly respond by crying and withdrawal. They often have a negative view of their situation and of themselves, feeling a sense of shame and failure. They are often isolated, lonely, and/or depressed and may be emotionally fragile.

The provocative target is a child who is restless, irritable, and who teases and

*"The target is vulnerable. Everybody sees your wounds."*

*"When people turn away and don't even acknowledge you're alive, that's bullying."*

provokes others. They are children who are easily emotionally aroused. These children fight back in bullying situations, but are ineffectual aggressors. More difficult to recognize as a target than the passive target, the provocative target engages the bully but loses the power struggle. In a bully/target situation, the provocative target is in over his/her head.

Targets of either type may be students with special education needs. Research supports that students with learning disabilities are at greater risk of being targeted. All students, but particularly those who are targeted, might greatly benefit from life skills development to broaden their repertoire of responses in social situations and conflict.

### **Bystanders**

The most common characteristic of bystanders is that they choose not to take action when they witness a bullying situation. Bystanders often fear the attack will spread to them. Later, they frequently feel guilty that they have not stepped in to help. Observers are also susceptible to the contagious effect of bullying. Sometimes they join in the stigmatization.

Because 75-85 percent of students are not directly involved in bullying as targets or perpetrators, witnesses can be powerful forces in changing bullying behavior in schools. Teaching students to safely utilize the power of the "caring majority" is essential in engaging the whole school population in efforts to counteract bullying.

Bullying has profound effects on all children in a school and community. Students fear retaliation, and also fear that no adult will help them. Children need to be taught to perceive adults as advocates, and to know that they will be kept safe. Targets and witnesses need to understand that they are not to blame, and that all children will get help when bullying takes place.

### **The Importance of Trained Educators**

Many times bullying behavior takes place when no adult is around. However, when adults are present, bullying is often ignored. One national survey shows students' perceive that teachers or other adults in classrooms do not address bullying incidents. Most of the time teachers have not been trained to handle bullying or to participate in whole-school frameworks on school safety. The lack of specific tools as well as enduring cultural norms that treat bullying as "kids being kids" lends itself to a modest response by school personnel.

### **Connecticut is Taking Action Against Bullying**

Recognizing the importance of this problem, The Governor's Prevention Partnership established a Bullying Task Force, co-chaired by Leslie Avena, Associate Commissioner, Connecticut State Department of Education, and Elaine

-  
-  
"A target can  
only take so  
much before he  
or she explodes  
and defends  
himself."

"I felt like a  
bad friend, a  
weak person,  
watching it. I  
just didn't  
know what to  
do."

Zimmerman, Executive Director, Connecticut Commission on Children to recommend effective school practices and public policy solutions to address bullying. The Task Force is comprised of experts in child development, learning, health, and aggression.

## SECTION II: Effective School Practices to Address Bullying

Criminologist Delbert Elliott studied over 450 programs to ascertain which best-addressed child aggression. Looking for replicable, cost-effective research-based models with significant deterrence effects, and sustainable outcomes, he found only 10 of what he defined as *Blueprints for Violence Prevention*.

*"The demand for effective violence and crime prevention programs has never been greater. To date, most of the resources committed to the prevention and control of youth violence at both the national and local levels, have been invested in untested programs based on questionable assumptions and delivered with little consistency or quality control. Further, the vast majority of these programs are not being evaluated. Worse yet, some of the most popular programs have actually been demonstrated in carefully scientific studies to be ineffective, and yet we continue to invest huge sums of money in them for largely political reasons."*

Delbert Elliott

*"Some teachers are observant, but there needs to be a personal relationship and protection for the student who reports."*

Bullying prevention and intervention, particularly when instituted at the elementary school level, have extensive outcomes with minimal costs. Early intervention keenly matters. Given the unexpected and startling impact of children shooting children in neighborhoods and schools, planful interventions and whole school training models are paramount to the right to learn in safety.

Specific anti-bully programs that have been utilized effectively in both Connecticut and the nation include:

- **Creative Response to Conflict, Inc. (CRC)** holds workshops for children and adults to develop skills to find nonviolent and creative solutions to conflict and bullying. Workshop programs include cooperation, communication, affirmation, bias awareness, mediation, diversity training and creative problem solving. It was founded in 1972 to encourage democratic values of tolerance and responsibility. (For information, contact Priscilla Prutzman or Harmony Jones, CRC, Box 271, 521 N. Broadway, Nyack, NY 10960, 845-353-1796, ccrnyack@aol.com. [www.crcglobal.org](http://www.crcglobal.org).)
- The main goal of the **Bullying Prevention Program**, developed by Scandinavian Researcher Dan Olweus, is to reduce bully/target problems in primary and secondary schools. It is the result of Olweus' pioneering research into bullying in schools, and includes the fundamental elements of effective bully prevention programs. A whole school approach, it aims to increase awareness/knowledge about the problem, to initiate action on the

part of all adults in the school community, to engage students in creating clear rules against bullying/aggressive behavior, and to develop support systems for the bully and the target of the bullying. Many states, including Maine, Colorado, South Carolina, Kansas and Massachusetts, have based their efforts on this model. (For Dan Olweus' model in U.S., Susan Limber, Ph.D., Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life, Clemson University, 243 Poole Agricultural Center, Clemson, South Carolina 29634, 864-656-6320)

“Where do  
bullies bully?”

- **Bully Proofing Your School** is a comprehensive curriculum, which trains school personnel to implement strategies at the whole school, classroom and individual levels. These strategies include developing staff awareness and skills, informing and empowering all students, intervening effectively with bullies, understanding and supporting targets, and engaging parents and community beyond the school walls. *Bully Proofing Your School* has manuals for elementary and middle schools, and parent handbooks. (For *Bully Proofing Your School*, Sally Stoker. 303-743-3670 ext. 8317)
- **The Bullying and Sexual Harassment Prevention/Intervention Program** addresses teasing, bullying, and harassment and includes four volumes. Jointly produced by the National Education Association, the Education Equity Concepts, Inc., and the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, *Quit it! Bully Proof, Flirting or Hurting*, and *Gender Violence Gender Justice* comprise the K-12 curriculum. The ultimate objective of the prevention/intervention program is to develop a whole school campaign to change the school culture, which supports sexual harassment and bullying behavior. This program provides a unique opportunity for the local school district and the local National Education Association (Connecticut Education Association) affiliate to form a partnership to bring the program into the school to control bullying. (For *NEA's Bullying and Sexual Harassment Prevention/Intervention Program*, Gaye Barke, 202-822-7732, E-mail: [gbarker@nea.org](mailto:gbarker@nea.org))
- **Don't Laugh at Me (DLAM)** seeks to address the problems of bullying, ridiculing, teasing, excluding, and harassment which commonly occur in schools. Based upon the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program in collaboration with Educators for Social Responsibility, the project was spearheaded by Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul, and Mary to help teachers to create and maintain a climate of respect in the classroom and the school. A core element of the underlying philosophy of the DLAM Project is the view that all members of the education community have a shared obligation to help create and maintain climates of respect through the community. (Jo Ann Freiberg, Connecticut Program Coordinator, 6 Irene Lane, Farmington, CT 06032, 860-674-8527, 860-676-1833 fax, [joannfreiberg@aol.com](mailto:joannfreiberg@aol.com))

Where don't  
they?”

“Teachers walk  
down the hall.

When kids are  
bullying or

being bullied,

the teacher

keeps walking”.

- **Names Can Really Hurt Us** was developed in 1995 by the Connecticut Office of The Anti-Defamation League in response to educators' requests for a vehicle to teach students respect for differences. Names Can Really Hurt Us is a powerful student-centered assembly program designed to provide a safe forum in which students examine difficult issues and effect positive change in their own behavior and in their school communities. The planning and training process, involving administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community leaders requires approximately two months in advance of the assembly date. The program culminates with representatives sharing "Next Step" ideas with the goal of creating a school community that is welcoming and supportive of all students. (*Names Can Really Hurt Us, Marji Lipshez-Shapiro, Project Director, 345 Whitney Avenue, New Haven 06511-2316, 203-772-1300, Fax: 203-787-1524.*)
- The basic **Second Step** curriculum teaches students problem-solving and social skills. Lessons are divided into three areas: empathy training, impulse control, and anger management. There are four curricula, targeted to grades preschool to kindergarten, 1-3, 4-5, and 6-8. Second Step materials are also available in Spanish and represent a variety of races, cultures and handicaps. The **Steps to Respect** is a new offering for grades 3-6, focusing on bullying prevention. (*For Second Step, Committee for Children, 2203 Airport Way South, Suite 500 Seattle, WA 98134, 800-643-4449, Fax: 206-343-1445, E-mail: info@cfchildren.org*)
- **The Youth Connect® Program** involves students in discussions about, and the elimination of, negative behaviors. It is a non-violence strategy, which fits within any existing core academic class or elective in grades 6-12 and challenges the acceptance of violence in peer groups, classrooms, homes, and the community. The program becomes the first ten minutes of each class day, with interactive, user-friendly lessons that require little or no preparation time for the facilitator but which strengthen relationships between students, faculty, parents, and administrators. (*For The Youth Connect Program, Wanette Meekins, phone 281-479-4332; fax 281-479-4394*)
- **Get Real About Violence** is an interactive, mixed media, research-based violence prevention curriculum available for students and staff in grades K-12. Recognized by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention as a "Promising Program" in prevention, Get Real About Violence incorporates normative education, skill streaming, cooperative team learning, and risk reduction research to target the attitudes and behaviors that underlie violence. The program offers easy-to-use lesson plans with videos and activities that impact the school, family and community. Get Real About Violence was developed by Comprehensive Health Education Foundation, the producers of Here's Looking At You, and Get Real About Tobacco. (*For further details about curriculum, training, or to receive free demonstration materials, contact Wynn Shawver, 800-323-9084 ext. 106, wshawver@unitedlearning.com*)

*"I liked it that  
the teacher  
defended me."*

*"Bullies feed  
off your  
insecurities."*

- **No-Bullying** is The Hazelden/Johnson Institute's K-8 program which includes teacher manuals and student handbooks for grades K-8. It provides grade-specific activities that help facilitate discussion about bullying and guides a group in creating positive norms about how they want to treat one another. This classroom curriculum would fit well integrated into a whole school bully prevention program. Parent awareness information and activities are also available. *(For the No-Bullying curriculum, Hazelden Information and Educational Services, 1-800-328-9000, www.htbookplace.org)*
- **Challenge Day** is a powerful, all day workshop that addresses issues of violence, bullying, stereotypes and social oppression. It challenges the 100 participants (80 high school or middle school students and 20 adults from the community and/or school personnel) to see beyond their differences. Through a series of experiential games, activities, group discussions and trust building exercises, participants learn how to break down their walls of separation and create new levels of respect and communication that infuse their school community with caring and makes bullying *un-cool*. Challenge Day has reached thousands of youth since its inception in 1987, and was featured in a television documentary, *Teen Files: Surviving High School*, and the book, *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul*. The workshop provides the foundation for a possible year-round mentorship program that sees youth as assets and facilitates a paradigm shift utilizing peer pressure as a positive influence. *(The Challenge Day associates Program, PO Box 2208, Martinez, CA 94553. 925-957-0234; fax 925-957-9425; www.Challengeday.com)*

“It’s the person  
 on the  
 receiving end  
 who really  
 decides if it’s  
 bullying  
 or not.”

**Other Training Resources for Bully Prevention Programs in Connecticut**

Sonia D’Amato  
The Governor’s Prevention Partnership  
30 Arbor Street  
Hartford, CT 06106  
860-523-8042 ext. 32  
Sonia.D’amato@preventionworksct.org

Sue Fulleton  
Connecticut Education Association  
21 Oak Street  
Hartford CT 06106-8001  
860-525-5641  
Suef@cea.org

Nancy Pugliese  
Safe and Drug Free Schools Consultant  
Connecticut State Department of Ed.  
P.O. Box 2219, Room 227  
Hartford, CT 06145  
860-566-5545  
Nancy.Pugliese@po.state.ct.us

### SECTION III: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BULLYING TASK FORCE

Early intervention in the home, school, and community is the best hope for diverting child and youth aggression, including bullying behaviors, in the schools. An effective response to bullying requires multiple strategies, ranging from those intended to prevent bullying from ever occurring, to those that require immediate and firm intervention.

The Bullying Task Force studied the comprehensive research on bullying, analyzed current model programs in the United States, brought in national experts, led public hearings on school safety and facilitated middle and high school student focus groups on school safety and bullying. From this research, the following recommendations are made to offer students a positive, safe learning environment:

1. Research-based **anti-bullying programs** should be instituted in schools in the early and middle grades. The core components of these programs should include:

*“Teachers lack  
of supervision  
makes bullying  
easier.”*

#### A. School-Wide Components:

- A school-based team to coordinate and maintain bully prevention efforts;
- Whole-school training for professional and paraprofessional staff including, but not limited to, nurses, bus drivers, maintenance and cafeteria staff, office personnel, and volunteers to address instances of bullying effectively;
- A coordinated system of supervising students, with attention to increased adult supervision in areas where bullying most frequently occurs;
- A mechanism through which students can report bullying safely;
- An atmosphere that makes telling/talking about bullying acceptable;
- A consistently enforced discipline policy, which includes codes of conduct for students and staff, and specific rules and language against bullying behaviors;
- On-going public education efforts to reach all stakeholders (students, staff, boards of education, parents, community); and
- An evaluation component, which includes pre and post-test surveys to assess perceptions of safety and effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies.

#### B. Classroom-Level Components:

- Student and teacher-created classroom rules against bullying behaviors; and
- Regular classroom meetings/group discussions with students about bullying/respectful behavior.

**C. Individual-Level Components:**

- Non-punitive, multi-level, ongoing interventions with students identified as bullies, including consistent enforcement of non-punitive, graduated consequences, as well as establishing systems of support to reduce aggressive behaviors and strengthen positive social interactions;
  - Interventions with students identified as targets, including establishing systems of support to develop a stronger sense of security at school and to strengthen assertive social interactions;
  - Parent engagement, including discussing behaviors of concern, consequences, and systems of support.
2. Both pre-service and in-service **training for teachers, parents and other adults** in school buildings, (including coaches, parent volunteers, bus drivers, maintenance staff, administrators, guards, paraprofessionals, secretaries, etc.) should be provided to develop the skills and support necessary to take responsibility for creating and sustaining safe school environments.
  3. **Primary prevention policies** should be adopted and implemented by school boards. The anti-bullying policy should be included in student and parent handbooks and reviewed with all staff periodically.
  4. A **competitive grant program** for schools seeking to implement model anti-bullying programs should be developed by the State Department of Education.
  5. **Alternate supports and strategies** for students should be implemented in school buildings. These may include provision of after-school programs, anger management classes, character education, mentoring, conflict resolution, counseling for students and families, diversity training for students and adults, and alternative placements for at-risk students.
  6. A **compendium of best practices** to reduce youth aggression, promote school safety and engage students in the planning should be developed and posted on the State Department of Education web site.
  7. **Health professionals**, including school psychologists, school counselors, school nurses and school social workers, should be integral members of the intervention team. They should participate with mental health colleagues in identification and assessment of bullying behaviors, assist in the design and implementation of bullying behaviors and assist in the design and implementation of group and individual interventions for both bullies and targets and act as consultants to parents and school personnel.
  8. **Collaborative agreements** among schools and community-based organizations should be developed in order to ensure replication of prevention program strategies and principles in the services they provide to students and families.

BULLYING BEHAVIORS CHART*					
MILD	MODERATE				SEVERE
<b>PHYSICAL AGGRESSION</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pushing</li> <li>• Shoving</li> <li>• Spitting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kicking</li> <li>• Hitting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defacing property</li> <li>• Stealing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical acts that are demeaning and humiliating, but not bodily harmful (e.g., de-panting)</li> <li>• Locking in a closed or confined space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical violence against family or friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threatening with a weapon</li> <li>• Inflicting bodily harm</li> </ul>
<b>SOCIAL ALIENATION</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gossiping</li> <li>• Embarrassing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting up to look foolish</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethnic Slurs</li> <li>• Setting up to take the blame</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publicly humiliating (e.g., revealing personal information)</li> <li>• Excluding from group</li> <li>• Social rejection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maliciously excluding</li> <li>• Manipulating social order to achieve rejection</li> <li>• Malicious rumor-mongering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threatening with total isolation by peer group</li> </ul>
<b>VERBAL AGGRESSION</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mocking</li> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Dirty looks</li> <li>• Taunting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teasing about clothing or possessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teasing about appearance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intimidating phone calls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verbal threats of aggression against property or possessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verbal threats of violence or of inflicting bodily harm</li> </ul>
<b>INTIMIDATION</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threatening to reveal personal information</li> <li>• Graffiti</li> <li>• Publicly challenging to do something</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defacing property or clothing</li> <li>• Playing a dirty trick</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking possessions (e.g., lunch, clothing, toys)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extortion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threats of using coercion against family or friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coercion</li> <li>• Threatening with a weapon</li> </ul>
<b>RACIAL AND ETHNIC HARASSMENT</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joke telling with racial or ethnic targets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusion due to ethnic or cultural group membership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Racial or ethnic slurs, put downs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verbal accusations, insults</li> <li>• Public humiliation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destroying or defacing property due to ethnic or cultural group membership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical or verbal attacks due to group membership</li> </ul>
<b>SEXUAL HARASSMENT</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual or "dirty" jokes</li> <li>• Conversations that are too personal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Howling, catcalls, whistles</li> <li>• Leers and stares</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Snuggies" (pulling underwear up at the waist)</li> <li>• Repeatedly asking someone out when he or she isn't interested</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreading sexual rumors</li> <li>• Pressure for sexual activity</li> <li>• De-panting</li> <li>• Bra snapping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cornering, blocking, standing too close, following too close</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual assault and attempted sexual assault</li> <li>• Rape</li> </ul>

\* from *Bully Proofing Your School: A Comprehensive Approach for Middle Schools* by Marla Bonds and Sally Stoker, Sopris Press, 2000. Used with permission by the authors.

### **Bullying Task Force Report Collaborators**

**The Governor's Prevention Partnership** is a non-profit, public private partnership, co-chaired by the Governor and a business CEO, whose mission is to lead a statewide prevention movement to promote the health, safety, and well-being of the state's future and current workforce. The organization has six major focus areas: parent involvement, youth mentoring, success at school, youth leadership, safe and drug free communities and prevention media campaigns.

**The Connecticut State Board of Education** is responsible for general supervision and control of the educational interests of the state, including preschool, elementary and secondary education, special education, vocational education and adult education. It has a responsibility to assure that each child has, for the period described in the general statutes, equal opportunity to receive a suitable program of educational experiences. The Board provides leadership and promotes the improvement of education in the state, including research, planning, evaluation, educational technology, the publishing of guides to curriculum development and other technical assistance materials, the presentation of workshops and assessment.

**The Connecticut Commission on Children** brings representatives from the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government together with the private sector to promote public policies to improve the health, safety and learning of children through policy, capacity building and coordination. Through its statutory mandates, the Commission:

- Provides information and conducts research regarding the status of children and children's programs in the state;
- Enlists the support of the leaders of business, health, and education communities, state and local governments and the media to improve services and policies for children;
- Reviews coordination and assesses programs and practices in all state agencies as they affect children.

**Bullying Task Force Members**

Leslie Aversa, Co-Chair	Department of Education
Elaine Zimmerman, Co-Chair	Commission on Children
Cate Bourke	The Governor's Prevention Partnership
DeEtta Breitwieser	Connecticut Coalition of Pupil Services
Wanda Butler	Pomperaug High School
Karen Charest	Office of Congressman Christopher Shays
Gary Dennis	Windsor Partnership
Timothy Doyle	Connecticut Association of Schools
Therese Duncan	Connecticut Parent Teacher Association
Steven Edwards	East Hartford High School
Jo Ann Freiberg	Don't Laugh At Me
Paula Gill-Lopez	Connecticut Association of School Psychologists
Frances Gleason	Windsor Partnership
Elaine Gustafson	Yale University School of Nursing
Catherine Hogan	Connecticut Association of School Social Workers
Andrea Iger	Connecticut Children's Medical Center
Honorable Alex Knopp	House of Representatives
Jascinth Kong	Connecticut Children's Medical Center
Chareen Ledbetter	Hartford Urban League
Eleanor S. Lee	Eli Terry School
Marji Lipshez-Shapiro	Anti-Defamation League
Paula Lively	New Haven Police Department
Maggie Mahland	Connecticut Education Association (CEA)
Kathleen Matusiak	New Milford Public Schools
Owen McDonnell	New Fairfield High School
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Susan Patrick	The Governor's Prevention Partnership
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Michael Savage	Connecticut Association of Schools
Michael Schwarzchild	Connecticut Psychological Association
Michele Smith	Windsor Partnership
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Roberta Tundermann	West Hartford Public Schools
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Ebony Watson	Stop the Violence