

# Massachusetts House of Representatives Bill Summary

**Bill No:** S 209

**Title:** An Act to Promote Safer Schools and Communities

**Sponsor:** Sen. Baddour

**Committee:** Education

**Hearing Date:** 11/17/09

**Similar Matters:** None

**Prior History:** Refile of H. S. 294 of 2007-2008 session; Favorable.

**Current Law:** None

**Summary:** Petition creates MGL 71: 37O that defines bullying as "repeated written, electronic, or verbal expressions, physical acts or gestures which a reasonable student under the circumstances should know would or could cause (1) physical harm, (2) damage to another student's property, or (3) an hostile school environment. The behavior must be severe and must interfere with a student's academic performance or ability to learn or participate in services, activities or privileges. (b) Requires that every school district: (1) have a statement prohibiting bullying, and (2) adopt a bullying prevention plan. (c) Describes the requirements of the bullying prevention plan which include: (1) a statement prohibiting bullying and retaliation against reports of bullying, (2) a procedure for reporting bullying, (3) age-appropriate descriptions of expected behavior, (4) ongoing professional development, (5) an outline of responsive procedures that is flexible and age appropriate.

Nothing in this bill creates or supersedes existing rights under state or federal law, or creates a private remedy for enforcement of this section.

Section 37P: (a) Requires the Board of Education to approve a list of school bullying prevention resources. (b) Exempts schools from implementing section 37O unless the state appropriates funds to pay for bullying prevention resources.

The DOE is required to establish rules for reporting requirements for incidents of bullying.

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