



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

SENATOR STEVEN A. BADDOUR

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January 26, 2010

Senator Robert O'Leary
State House, Room 511B
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Martha M. Walz
State House, Room 473 G
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman O'Leary and Chairwoman Walz:

In light of recent events I am writing to request Senate Bill 209, "An Act to Promote Safer Schools and Communities" to be released from the Committee on Education with a favorable report. This was included last year in a comprehensive anti-bullying bill S. 2637, "An Act Relative Bullying".

This bill seeks to help schools develop a plan to counteract bullying by requiring that each school district establish measures that will lay out consequences for bullying and establish guidelines for reporting bullying incidents in schools. The bill protects victims of bullying, limits the activity of bullies, and includes families in the reporting process.

This legislation will provide school administrators with the tools they need to fight back against bullying at no cost to the Commonwealth. This bill also recognizes the community partnerships necessary to combat bullying, by first outlining specific guidelines for each bullying prevention plan, and then requiring district superintendents to develop their bullying prevention plan in consultation with teachers, staff, professional support personnel, administrators, students and parents.

Bullying has severe negative consequences for both the victims and the bullies. In surveys, approximately 14% of all students in Massachusetts schools said they were afraid of being bullied on a regular basis. Additionally 33% of all mainstreamed special needs students were found to be regular victims of bullying. According to the National Education Association (NEA), approximately 160,000 children nationwide miss school each day because of fear of attack or intimidation from peers. Additionally, those who bully are significantly more likely to be involved in criminal behavior later in life and are four times more likely than their peers to be convicted of a crime by age 24.

I therefore urge this Committee to report out Senate Bill 209 with a favorable recommendation. I would be happy to provide the committee with any additional information or answer any questions members may have. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Steven A. Baddour
First Essex District
State Senator