

February 2006

HOUSE BILL 276 would require school districts to adopt policy on "bullying"

State Representative Jimmy Stewart (R-92nd District) of Athens is the prime sponsor for Amended Substitute House Bill 276, known as the Bullying Bill.

Having been passed by the Ohio House, the bill is now pending in the Ohio Senate, assigned to the Education Committee. The impetus for the bill was the suicide of a Delaware County teenager who had been a bullying victim. As result a community group was formed to lobby for mandated school district policies prohibiting harassment.

Am. Sub. H.B. 276 would:

- Require each school district board of education to adopt a policy prohibiting harassment, intimidation or bullying on school property or at a school-sponsored activity.
- Require the State Board of Education to develop a model policy prohibiting student harassment, intimidation or bullying.
- Authorize school districts and community schools to form bullying prevention initiatives and require them to provide training and education on student harassment, intimidation or bullying if funds are appropriated for that purpose.

The only controversy arising from testimony on the bill involves the issue of enumerating in the bill the various groups of students most likely to be harassed. The GLBT community has gone on record demanding that an enumerated list be included. Others in support of the bill have also suggested that an enumerated list could be helpful to school districts. To date, legislators have refused to add an enumerated list.

Members of the Ohio Senate Education Committee are Senators

- Joy Padgett (R-20th District), Chair
- Gary Cates (R-4th District), Vice Chair
- John Carey (R-17th District)
- Randy Gardner (R-2nd District)
- Jeff Jacobson (R-6th District)
- Larry Mumper (R-26th District)
- Teresa Fedor (D-11th District), Ranking Minority
- Eric Fingerhut (D-25th District)
- Ray Miller (D-15th District)

You may leave a message for your legislator by calling the toll-free Legislative Information Phone Line (800 282-0253) or the local Columbus number (614 466-8842).