

To: **The Commission to Review Statutes Relative to Implementation of the School Bullying Law**
Martha Coakley, Chair
February 17, 2001
Hearing at Western New England College, Springfield, Mass.
Review of Anti-bullying MGL chapter 92 law

I would like to caution the Commission about recommending to the State Legislature changes in the current anti-bullying law that are put forth by special interest groups in an effort to further their specific agendas.

For instance, you might be urged to add, or “enumerate,” categories or classes of people.

GLSEN, for example, wants these enumerated items added to the law:

“sex, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.”

They claim anti-bullying legislation is more “effective” with enumeration, but don't cite specific *independent* surveys that prove that to be the case. In fact, a University of Oregon study showed that anti-bullying programs in general have little effect on the amount of incidents and in some cases, teachers reported more bullying after intervention programs than before.

Regardless:

The legislature voted unanimously for the law in part because enumeration was not included.

Adding enumeration language is a back-door way of trying to force the legislature to meet GLSEN's “model language.”

This is dangerous, because, with the terminology in the law, the door is opened for mandatory “diversity” type training programs which would bypass the Parents' Rights Opt-Out law.

Adding enumeration also opens the door for bullying to occur against categories of students that are not specifically enumerated. As the law stands now, all children are covered. All children are treated equally. Once categories are adding, loopholes will then be discovered in an unintended consequence. Adding enumerated categories implies children are not “equal” to begin with.

We are all against harassment or bullying in any environment. The behavior of children with each other is really an upbringing issue and the State should not be in the business of micro-managing family life. Instead, we should encourage all efforts to strengthen our society with families in covenant relationships, where the father provides and protects and the mother nurtures and teaches. That way, bullying is stopped before it starts. Punitive and regulatory laws serve only to perpetuate and bandage the problem. Likewise, an environment that lets children bring their parents to court when discipline is warranted does not help the problem. The government can never do what proper family relationships provide.

Again, I urge that the Commission to not open door for changes in legislation that are cloaked in language that try to advance specific groups' agendas.

Respectfully submitted,
Keith Davis, Holyoke, Mass