



My name is Sammy and I am a member of the Franklin Teenangels Chapter. Teenangels is a program of WiredSafety, which also runs StopCyberbullying.org.

Thank you for allowing us to testify today. Our Teenangels chapter is made up of 17 students from our three middle schools and high school in Franklin Massachusetts. We began our chapter in August 2009 and have been training for two years on cyberbullying and responsible technology use. We came together as a chapter because we believed something needed to be done about bullying and cyberbullying in our community.

We have completed many projects over the last two years to help educate our peers, teachers, and parents. Last year, elementary school principals in our town asked us to speak to their students because the teachers were seeing problems with social networking and cyberbullying issues in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades. When we heard about Phoebe Prince we began the Step Up, Speak Out campaign, in an attempt to educate our peers on how cyberbullying can lead to feelings of hopelessness and even suicide. That became the "Don't Stand By, Stand Up!" program featured on Dr Phil. Our mission is to spread the word that we all need to be part of the solution, not part of the problem when we see someone being bullied. We can no longer stand by and watch mean things happen.

Last spring we helped run a summit at the US Senate in Washington D.C. where we spoke with government officials and industry leaders on cyberbullying. In December we created and conducted the "Let's Talk About Cyberbullying" town meeting at Dean College to educate our community on what cyberbullying is, and how adults can protect the children of our town. More than 300 people attended.

This year we worked with our schools and helped to create WiredTeens clubs in each of our middle schools. The 75 students in the club work with us to educate peers on cyberbullying and responsible technology use in our schools. This week we are working with our WiredTeens to analyze results from an online survey we created for one of our middle schools. The survey was created to determine what



technology is being used by our peers to help educate them on responsible use. A few of the results are as follows:

78% of the students have a cell phone and 76% of those students text. 44% have a social networking account. 31% of the students say they have been bullied through texting and 30% have been or know someone who has been bullied online. Interestingly, 45% said they learned about cyberbullying from *us* and 88% of the students said they would stop bullying or cyberbullying if they saw it. We are telling you this because we feel peer to peer education really makes a difference.

*[second Teenangel testimony]*

My name is Philip and I am also a member of the Franklin Teenangel Chapter. Last spring we met with Representative James Vallee and discussed the bullying law with him at the State House. We discussed the importance of the law and how it will help in our schools. As kids we need to know someone is watching out for us and with this law in place we feel that our teachers will pay more attention to what is happening where we see bullying the most; in the halls, the lunch room, the locker room and walking out the door after school. Although cyberbullying mostly happens outside of school it is usually brought into school the next day with kids talking about a mean posting or website at the lunch table or in the halls. One hurtful comment online or by text spreads to hundreds the next day and then becomes an in school issue for the victim. There is no way for the victim to get away from it. The law provides protection and help for victims.

At a recent Teenangels meeting we discussed the law and how our peers would learn about it in our schools. The reality is that most of our peers do not read the school handbook where the policies of bullying and cyberbullying will most likely be stated. They don't know their rights as a victim or understand the consequences of what would happen to them if they were the bully. Also, although the law mandates school action most of our peers and younger kids we talk to are afraid to tell a trusted adult. For most victims telling is tattling and



leads to bigger problems. While it is good to have laws in place that stop bullying and cyberbullying we believe there should be more in place to prevent it.

We think there should be more education required that would impact kids and help them learn about the law, their school policy, and their rights as a victim. Include education that would teach a bully that what they are doing has consequences. For kids our age a publicity campaign including videos, demonstrations and posters about the law and school policies would be very helpful in promoting the message that bullying in any form is not acceptable.

Based on our experiences we believe that peer to peer education has a huge impact. We would like to offer our help to begin peer education programs in Massachusetts. We will help get more Teenangels programs started, make videos, and talk to other schools because we think all kids should stand up and stop bullying and cyberbullying together. Thank-you.