

Hello Senators,

My name is Jeff Bennett. I want to thank you for hearing us today. I am here to talk about Bill #278 regarding Anti-Bullying, Cyber-bullying, Harassment, in memory of Rhianna Morawitz. I was raised catholic and transferred to a public high school my sophomore year. I was subjected to a very different kind of bullying back then. As times have change laws become outdated. Kids do not feel safe at school or while riding on the school bus. Updated laws need to put in place to protect children of all ages. I have known Rick, Rhianna's father since 1977 and Lisa, Rhianna's mother since they became a family in 1996. It is important that you know Rhianna was not an aggressive person. In fact, she had a very big heart. In this time of social networking, cyber-bullying has become out of control. Laws need to be changed so that our schools are not only accountable for protecting students but to also protect staff, volunteers or anyone subjected to this type of bully behavior. All children should feel safe at school; all day, every day. I know there are people who will say it will cost too much and that the parents should be responsible. While we all agree that parents need to be the best parent they can, some just can't, for whatever reason. However, this is about passing Bill #278 so that all schools in the state of Kansas will have better tools and newer policies in place to protect our children and grand children. This is not just about giving our schools the right to hold bullies accountable but to also hold teachers, principles, all school staff accountable for reporting such behavior. For the safety of our kids; your kids and all kids let's pass bill # 278. Again all kids should feel safe at school. In closing the children of today are our future leaders of tomorrow. Let's do all we can now to protect their future.

Respectfully,

Jeff Bennett