

Dear Senator,

There is no doubt bullying is an becoming an increasingly prevalent trend found in many schools, while at the same time is still far too often perceived as a normal part of growing up. In the past most harassment, intimidation, and bullying began as teasing intended to torment others and confined to the school yard, occurring during school hours. However, advances in technology have increased the ability of bullies to bother their victims 24/7 if they desire. We must admit the problem has been magnified in recent years and is impacting more and more lives.

The conduct of bullying is so perverse and offensive that it substantially interferes with the daily life for many children and young adults. Many parents and teachers are ignorant of bullying until they are faced with a tragedy as in the case of my beautiful granddaughter Rhianna Lynn Morawitz. Last September, fourteen year old Rhianna took her life, just weeks into her freshman year at Wichita Northeast High School. She had been relentlessly bullied online, through text messaging and in person. It is our hope that the Anti-bullying, Harassment and Cyber-Bullying Prevention Bill (Senate 278) will help protect other children and young adults from torment and discourage bullies in the first place.

Senate 278 specifically outlines what constitutes bullying, thus clarifying and defining the methods of bullying which have changed dramatically in recent years. The bill will also require a stronger reaction from school districts. This is important as school districts need to recognize the wide-spread and far-reaching consequences of bullying in all forms. Any bullying act will be reported to the school principal who will then report the act to the parents of *all* students involved. Keeping everyone informed of such bullying acts will increase communication of why the act is occurring in the first place and prevent recurrence. I was told by Rhianna's school principle that, "There's no bullying going on at our school". There is no excuse for such ignorance from our school districts.

Shame on all of us for not being more mindful of bullying in all its forms. My hope is that no other child will have to suffer as Rhianna suffered Please consider this Bill as our kids are the future and need protected.

Respectively,

Pat Jones

"Rhianna's Nana"