



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JOHN D. KEENAN

CHAIRMAN

COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, ARTS AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1054

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 18, 2010

CONTACT: Lynne Montague
617-722-2015

Rep. Keenan Joins Colleagues Passes Anti-Bullying Bill *Prohibits Bullying and Cyber-bullying*

BOSTON – State Representative John D. Keenan joined his colleagues in the Massachusetts House of Representatives in passing legislation that would prohibit bullying and cyber-bullying while requiring schools to develop a bullying prevention plan and integrate bullying prevention instruction into their curriculum.

“This bill aims to secure our students from bullying both during the school day and after school hours,” House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo said. “In light of recent tragedies, the House has taken the appropriate steps to protect our students from the terror of bullying and cyber-bullying.”

“Our schools need to be free from bullying in all forms – whether it comes on school grounds, away from school, or over cyberspace,” House Committee on Ways and Means Chairman Charles A. Murphy said. “With our actions today, we’re putting school officials, teachers, parents, and students on notice that bullying will not be allowed to interfere with a child’s ability to get an education.”

Representative Keenan said, “I am pleased with the steps taken today and that the bill passed includes a professional development component so that our schools will recognize, report and protect against bullying. Bullying today has taken on new forms – the playground has expanded and strong action was required.”

The bill prohibits bullying at school – including at school-sponsored events, on school busses and at school bus stops – as well as the use of electronic devices to carry out cyber-bullying. The bill also bans bullying or cyber-bullying that takes place outside of school if the bullying affects the school environment.

The bill directs the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to set regulations requiring school teachers and staffers to report incidents of bullying. The legislation also dictates that a school must promptly investigate reports of bullying and notify local law enforcement if the bullying would result in criminal charges.

In an effort to protect against incidents of bullying across the Commonwealth, the bill requires schools to add bullying prevention instruction to their curriculum and offer information about bullying prevention to parents. It also well provides for the training of teachers and staff in the identification, prevention, and response to bullying among students.

The legislation would apply to public schools, charter schools and schools providing special education services to students for school districts. It also requires each of these entities to develop a bullying prevention and intervention plan. Such plans must include methods for responding to bullying, guidelines for giving notice to parents of those involved in bullying and appropriate services for students who have been bullied or acted as a bully.

###