

February 22, 2021

Dear Chair and Members of the House Committee on Education,

Our names are Michael and Danna Myers and we are parents of two children residing in Clackamas County. We are writing in support HB 2631 which prescribes notification requirements for school districts upon receipt of an act of harassment, bullying or cyberbullying. Sadly, we know families who have been impacted by the loss of a child due to suicide caused by the despair of being cyberbullied.

We live in a time when our children are connected with their peers more and more virtually with the use of social media. They are engaged throughout the day using their phones to check Instagram, Snapchat, Tik Tok, and texting—to name just a few platforms- in order to stay connected with their community of friends. As any parent of a teenager knows, watching them scroll through these various platforms with quickness and ease is akin to watching someone speak a different language. You do not know what is being said, nor the context surrounding these interactions. Bullying and harassment can literally be occurring right under your nose, and right next to you on the couch, without your knowledge.

HB 2631 is important to us because:

- Without this law, school districts are **not** required to notify parents of students who are victims and aggressors in incidents of harassment, bullying or cyberbullying.
- Research shows that peer harassment leads to depression, decreased self-worth, hopelessness and loneliness which contribute to suicidal thoughts and actions.
- If parents are not informed about their child's involvement in bullying at school as either the victim or aggressor, they will not be able to provide needed mental health support.

Harassment, bullying and cyberbullying will never completely go away in the lives of our children. However, it is now occurring more and more in a virtual setting, and not in a public format. In order for a community to address bullying concerns so they we can intervene quickly and provide support to the harassed, we must first be made aware of these incidences! Because our schools serve as the cornerstone of our children's peer interactions, school districts must act as the frontline and notify the parents of all students involved.

Sincerely,

Michael and Danna Myers
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