



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kenneth P. LaValle

## Senator LaValle Supports Anti-Bullying Bills –

KENNETH P. LAVALLE May 4, 2010

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### **Package of Bills Address Bullying, Cyber-Bullying, and Hazing**

Senator Kenneth P. LaValle today announced that the Senate Republicans unveiled an anti-bullying plan that would prohibit any type of bullying on school property and at school functions, increase the penalties for hazing, and establish a statewide central registry for reporting bullying, cyber-bullying, and hazing. “No child should have to go to school in fear of being harassed and terrorized by their peers,” said Senator LaValle. “In recent weeks, news stories have reminded us of how vicious bullying can be and the painful consequences of these acts. The package of bills we are introducing will give our schools the resources needed to help reduce such incidents and provide a safe learning environment for students.” New York is one of only seven states that do not have a specific law to target school bullying. In addition, reports of cyber-bullying are at an all time high. According to the National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, bullying can be reduced by up to 50 percent when there is a school-wide commitment to preventative and educational programs.

The package of bills unveiled by the Senate Republicans would:

- Ø Require the inclusion of methods for discouraging acts of bullying and cyber-bullying within the school's character education program;
  - Ø Define bullying and cyber-bullying and add these acts to the list of incidents for which disciplinary measures must be taken;
  - Ø Require all schools to report incidents of bullying and cyber-bullying;
  - Ø Create the crime of Aggravated Harassment of Teachers and School Personnel;
  - Ø Establish a state hotline where individuals may anonymously report instances of bullying, cyber-bullying and hazing;
  - Ø Elevate the penalties associated with the crimes of hazing, particularly where a person is injured or dies.
- “While steps have been taken to reduce bullying on school grounds, we are living in a technological age that offers new ways for bullies to target their victims,” said Senator LaValle. “The package of bills we are putting forth addresses this problem in a relevant manner that protects students and educators from vicious taunting.”