



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas P. Morahan

Senate Passes Landmark Legislation to Halt Bullying and Abuse in the Workplace

THOMAS P. MORAHAN May 12, 2010

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Senator Morahan (center) with Legislative Counsel Stephen Powers (left) and Communications Director Ron Levine (right) pause for a moment to celebrate passage of Landmark Bully Bill.

New York State Senator Thomas P. Morahan, Chairman of the Committee on Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities today secured Senate passage of his landmark legislation (S.1823-B) which establishes a civil cause of action for employees who are subjected to an

abusive work environment.

Specifically, this legislation provides legal redress for employees who have been harmed psychologically, physically or economically by being deliberately subjected to abusive work environments; and it provides legal incentives for employers to prevent and respond to mistreatment of employees at work.

Surveys and studies demonstrate that 16 to 21 percent of employees experience health-endangering workplace bullying, abuse and harassment, and that this behavior is 4 times more prevalent than sexual harassment. These studies have also documented the serious effects on these targeted employees. They include: shame, humiliation, stress, loss of sleep, severe anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, reduced immunity to infection, gastrointestinal disorders, hypertension and pathophysiologic changes that increase the risk of cardiovascular disease.

“The social and economic well-being of the State is dependent upon healthy, safe, and productive employees,” said Senator Morahan. “I want to thank all my colleagues, on both sides of the aisle, who voted for this legislation today. In particular, Senator George Onorato, Chairman of the Labor Committee, Republican Leader Dean Skelos, Majority Conference Leader John Sampson and Deputy Majority Leader Jeff Klein for helping secure passage of the legislation”.

“I became aware of the prevalence of abusive environments in the workplace when one of my constituents brought her situation at her place of employment to my attention. It became apparent that legislation was needed to address the problem,” said Morahan.

“Workplace bullying, abuse and harassment bring with them a variety of very serious human and economic costs,” said Senator George Onorato, Chairman of the Labor Committee and

co-prime sponsor of the legislation. “Abusive behavior can cause grievous harm to employees who are the victims of it, leading to all manner of health problems and, often, forcing them to leave their jobs to escape it. In addition, it costs employers in terms of lost employee productivity, and other workplace problems. By taking aim at abusive work environments, this legislation will protect employees from inappropriate behavior and help our businesses to become more productive and successful.”

“Mistreatment of employees in the workplace is a serious issue, but too often, workers have no recourse when they are subject to an abusive work environment,” said Senate Republican Leader Dean G. Skelos. “Senator Morahan’s legislation will help employees who have been harmed, physically, mentally or financially, and will encourage employers to do more to prevent and respond to this problem.”

“We are truly appreciative of Senator Morahan’s efforts which have culminated in the passage of vital legislation today in the New York State Senate,” said New York Healthy Workplace Advocate State Coordinators Mike Schlicht and Tom Witt.

“On behalf of the workforce of our State, I call on my Legislative colleagues in the Assembly to pass this bill in their house,” said Senator Morahan.

Click to [here](#) to see coverage from the [Wall Street Journal](#) on the [legislation](#).