



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Providing All Students With A Safe Learning Environment

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS June 23, 2010

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### *Senate Passes Landmark 'Dignity For All Students Act'*

Committed to ensuring that all students have a safe environment in which to learn, free from harassment and discrimination, the Senate Democratic Majority passed the 'Dignity for All Students Act' (S1987B/ Duane). This legislation aims to provide all students with a safe school environment conducive to learning by putting an end to harassment and discrimination based on but not limited to race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex.

In order to address these issues and establish a safer, more constructive school environment, this bill:

- Prohibits harassment or discrimination against students by employees or students while on school property or on school grounds.
- Defines "harassment" as the creation of a hostile environment by conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that has or would unreasonably interfere with educational performance, opportunities, benefits, or physical or emotional well being, or cause fear for physical safety.

- Prohibits discrimination based on an individual's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.

“Preventing bullying and harassment in our classrooms and schools is critical to establishing a healthy and productive learning environment,” said Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins (35th District – D/WF). “This bill will provide the tools necessary for preventing this destructive behavior before the damage is done. I am pleased to stand with my colleagues in the Senate as we have finally passed this significant step in the battle for safety and equality in New York.”

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