



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Stephen M. Saland

## Senator Saland's Cyberbullying Bill Passes the Senate

STEPHEN M. SALAND June 19, 2012

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Senator Steve Saland (R,I,C – Poughkeepsie) announced today the passage of legislation which would provide further protections and procedures for students who are bullied or cyberbullied.

This legislation provides school districts with the tools they need to address bullying and cyberbullying to help ensure that the school environment is safe for all students. This comprehensive measure includes within the definitions of bullying and cyberbullying verbal and non-verbal actions, whether on or off school property, which create a risk of substantial disruption of the school environment.

Reports indicate that more than 7 million students from ages 12-18 were bullied at school and with the onslaught of technological advances in recent decades, more than 1.5 million students cite they were cyberbullied on or off school property.

“Students today live in a cyber-world – it’s how most choose to communicate. It’s also how many are cyberbullied -- whether through messaging, emails or social networking sites, it’s difficult for victims to escape the 24/7 exposure to threats, bullying or discrimination,” said Senator Saland. “With this new law, when cyberbullying impedes a student’s ability to learn, victims and their parents will now have the ability to report the incidents to school districts

to investigate. This is a critically needed step toward ensuring a safe school environment.”

Egregious acts of bullying and cyberbullying are far too commonplace among school age children and if left unaddressed, it can escalate into more serious violence and abuse and cause severe emotional harm. According to the U.S. Department of Education, long-term consequences associated with bullying include increased depression, substance abuse, aggressive impulses and school truancy.

This act provides reporting requirements; gives schools the ability to apply discipline through their code of conduct –even if the bullying occurred off school grounds; sets forth policies, procedures and guidelines for training; and provides for instruction on the safe and responsible use of technology with an emphasis on discouraging acts of discrimination, harassment and bullying.

“I thank the Governor for his leadership on this issue and Assemblyman O’Donnell for his advocacy. With the enactment of this important legislation, school districts will have the tools necessary to address all forms of bullying, as well as cyberbullying, whether initiated on or off school grounds if it’s affecting a child’s education,” said Senator Steve Saland. “Neither the public, nor the Legislature, can turn a blind eye to bullying. It’s debilitating, destructive, abusive, and at times, it can be fatal.”