



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Walczyk

Senator Walczyk Co-Sponsors Legislation, Enacting Jacobe's Law

MARK WALCZYK May 24, 2023

| ISSUE: **SCHOOL BULLYING, JACOBES LAW, PARENTAL RIGHTS**



Senator Mark Walczyk proudly co-sponsors S44, Jacobe's Law, to require school administrators to notify parents or guardians when there is a verified incident of harassment, bullying, or discrimination in school. Brought forth by Senator Jim Tedisco and Assemblywoman Mary Beth Walsh, Senator Walczyk joins sixteen other members of the New York State Senate in bi-partisan support of this bill.

In April of 2015, 13 year old Jacobe Taras tragically took his own life after being bullied and harassed in school. Bullying is a severe problem that our youth face. According to the

Department of Health and Human Services, 1-in-3 United States Students say they have been bullied in school. PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center, 41% of students who reported being bullied at school indicated that they think the bullying would happen again. Jacobe's law works in conjunction with the 2010 legislation, Dignity for All Students Act, to strengthen the protocol for parental notification of bullying incidents. While DASA includes provisions that streamline the protocol schools must follow when it comes to reporting bullying incidents to the New York State Department of Education, this law would clarify the requirements for schools to make reasonable and good faith efforts to inform parents of incidents as well. The extra step of informing parents of bullying incidents is incredibly important to averting future tragedies in our state's youth.

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"Parents have a right to know what's going on with their kids; period. Schools are required to report bullying incidents to the State Department of Education but not even give a call home - that's wrong," Walczyk said. "Whether a student is bullied, or a student is doing the bullying, their parents need to know. I'm honored to work on this important bill and will continue to push until it becomes the law of the land."

"The death of 13-year-old Jacobe Taras in 2015 due to suicide after bullying by other students is a tragic scenario I hope to never see play out in any other school with any other children," **said Assemblywoman Mary Beth Walsh.** "With the passage of 'Jacobese Law' (A.2231), schools would be required to inform parents of this behavior which would allow them to make an informed decision on how to best protect their bullied child. The direction of a child's health and well-being belongs in the hands of parents, not school administrators. This bill was not supported by the Assembly Majority; however, I don't believe any member could truthfully say that if their child was being bullied, they would not want to know."