



MASSACHUSETTS ANTI-BULLYING LEGISLATION

AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE PREVENTION OF BULLYING

House Docket No. 3250
House Bill No. 483

- Based on ADL's multistate model legislation for bullying prevention.
- Most comprehensive of the various anti-bullying bills introduced in January 2009.
- Addresses harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyberbullying in any public educational institution.
- Defines bullying as unwelcome written, electronic, verbal or physical acts or gestures where a student feels coerced, intimidated, harassed or threatened.
- Requires School Boards to adopt anti-harassment and bullying policies.
- Requires Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop a model policy and training materials, to review school districts for compliance, and to submit annual reports to the state legislature.
- Does not infringe on an individual's right to free speech.
- Does not create new grounds for a lawsuit.

WHY DOES MASSACHUSETTS NEED AN ANTI-BULLYING LAW?

- Almost 30% of youth in the United States (or over 5.7 million) are estimated to be involved in bullying as either a bully, a target of bullying, or both
- According to the 2007 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey:
 - 22% of high school students and 13% of middle school students reported having been the victim of bullying.
 - 14% of high school students and approximately 14% of middle school students reported that they had bullied or pushed someone around during the previous 12 months.
- Currently, 37 states and the District of Columbia have anti-bullying laws. Of those, 20 states have included provisions about cyber-bullying in their anti-bullying laws.

**For an online version of ADL's Bullying/Cyberbullying Prevention Toolkit, please visit:
www.adl.org**