

This memo is to document the steps taken to collect the legislative history for the soon to be completed An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools. This bill moved relatively quickly, in part due to local school tragedies, and thus there were fewer documents available than expected. Additionally, due to the often very personal nature of the hearing testimony, both the House and Senate sides of the Education Committee refused to allow its reproduction.

The Original Bills

On January 20, 2009, sixteen bills relative to preventing bullying and violence in schools were introduced and referred to the Joint Committee on Education.¹ While some of these bills were small technical matters – a few lines long – many were comprehensive attempts to address the problem of school bullying. Text of each of the bills was downloaded from Legis, and included in the folder marked Jan 20, 2009.

Hearing Materials

A hearing on the majority of the substantive bills was set for November 17, 2009. I first spoke to Michele Shelton who is the education staffer for Senator O’Leary, chair of the Education Committee. Although she was able to provide me with multiple folders worth of testimony from these hearings, she would not allow photocopies or scans to be made, citing the highly personal nature of many of the submitted documents. The House committee had a few of

¹ Specifically, Senate bills S209 - An Act to promote safer schools and communities; S228 - An Act relative to bullying; S233 - An Act relative to bullying; S242 - An Act relative to bullying in schools; S243 - An Act relative to bullying in schools; S281 - An Act to promote tolerance and reduce violence in schools; and S290 - An Act to Prevent Bullying and House bills H378 - An Act relative student handbooks; H428 - An Act relative to bullying in schools; H440 - An Act relative to school bullying prevention; H455 - An Act protecting students against bullying, cyberbullying, and teen dating violence; H483 - An Act Relative to the Prevention of Bullying; H524 - An Act relative to bullying in schools; H364 - An Act to prevent bullying; H3433 - An Act to Promote Conflict Resolution Curricula in Schools; and H3804 - An Act addressing bullying of children with autism spectrum disorder.

the same documents, but also indicated that they would not allow reproductions of the materials. Short summaries of the written testimony were allowed to be produced however and are collected in the Nov 17, 2009 folder. Additionally included are news reports about the hearing which describe in more detail the testimony given.

Bill Amendments

The history indicated that the multiple bills were combined and rectified into S2283 – which is included in the February 24, 2010 folder – which was reported favorably to the Senate and House Ways and Means Committees. Thus the next step was to go to each office and ask for any documents they could provide. While the House Ways and Means office indicated that they did not have a committee report other than the amended bill released as H4567, the Senate committee provided a committee report which is included along with S2313, the Senate Committee version of the bill, in the March 9, 2010 folder.

S2313 was referred to the Senate for voting on engrossment. Eleven amendments were originally proposed, and they are included with their results in the March 11, 2010 folder. Additionally, the Statehouse News report of the Senate vote, the Senate Journal, the video recording of the debate and the final senate bill – S2383 – were located and included.

In the House, H4567 was brought for a vote on March 18. Forty-three amendments were proposed, which are included in the amendments subfolder within the March 18, 2010 listing. As with the Senate version, the Statehouse News reports of the debate, the House Journal and the video of the debate were included, along with the final house version of the bill – H4571.

Conference Materials

On March 23 and 24 the conference members for the House and Senate were selected. As Sen. O’Leary was one of the selections, I was able to obtain copies of the summaries

produced for each version of the bill and included them in the March 23-24 folder. On April 29, the conference released the final bill, S2404, along with their conference notes. The Senate and the House both approved this bill on the same day. I included the text of the conference bill, the conference summary and the statehouse news reports of the Senate and House voting. The Bill was signed into law on May 3, 2010.