

**TERESA FEDOR**  
Ohio State Representative  
45<sup>th</sup> House District  
77 South High Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215



**Committees**  
Education—*Ranking Member*  
Armed Services, Veterans Affairs,  
Public Safety  
Ways and Means

## **REPRESENTATIVE TERESA M. FEDOR**

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### **HB 481—Stop Bullying License Plate Sponsor Testimony**

**February 28, 2018**

Good morning, Chairman Green, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Sheehy and my esteemed colleagues on the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee.

I am here today to provide sponsor testimony with Representative Greenspan for House Bill 481, which will create the Stop Bullying License Plate and Fund.

The Stop Bullying License plate will cost thirty-five dollars, twenty-five of which will go directly to the fund with the remaining covering administrative costs.

This fund is vitally important to the state of Ohio. Right now, our country is experiencing a rise in bullying, from taunts on the playground to the pernicious and pervasive practice of cyberbullying.

In a news report from February 23, 2018, TV10 reported that students are unlikely to report instances of bullying to parents or schools because they do not believe that it will make anything better and, indeed, may make the bullying worse.

Bullying is feeding into an epidemic of teen suicides, as we have seen and felt right here in Ohio. Suicide rates are climbing and children who are bullied are more likely to attempt suicide than their non-bullied counterparts. According to the Cyberbullying Research Center, cyberbullying victims are nearly twice as likely to attempt suicide as their peers. These children are often as young as twelve.

Research also shows that people who are bullied, face repeated rejection, or feel demeaned at school are more likely to respond with violence. Indeed, one-third of school shooters, according to the Secret Service's National Threat Assessment Center, were bullied in school. We have seen, again and again, the horrific effects of students dealing with bullying as violence in our schools has repeated.

Bullied students turn to violence, either against a community from which they face violence or against themselves. Bullying is a serious problem in the United States and we are seeing the stories play out in the news, in our schools, and in our homes.

This is a crisis and we have the power to work to end bullying before it happens. The fund created by House Bill 481 will allow groups to invest in prevention education rather than finding a way to repair a hurting child, rebuild a devastated school, or restore a broken community.