

## **Testimony in Support of House Bill 310 – Ohio Anti-Bullying and Hazing Act Before the Senate Education Committee**

Chair Lehner, Vice-Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony on House Bill 310, The Ohio Anti-Bullying and Hazing Act.

My name is Melanie Moore, and I am the mother of a child who has been a victim of both emotional and physical bullying. It began in 2nd grade, progressively got worse, and peaked in middle school in the 6th grade.

Where it ended was in early February, 2017 I received a call while at work from the assistant principal, and her first words were, “First of all he’s okay” she said in a very quiet voice. She went on to explain that my son had been put in a headlock from behind, his head was jerked upwards, and then he was thrown to the concrete floor by another student. She said the school nurse had checked him over and he was fine. I asked who the other student was, and she said she couldn’t tell me, but my son could. I asked if it was the same boy who had spit in his face the year before, the boy who had threatened to harm him during basketball season and make it look like it was part of the game play, the boy who had been caught with drugs in his locker, etc. and she said she could not tell me. I knew in my heart that it was that same boy, who was a known bully to my son and others, and yet was never held accountable by the school for his actions.

The physical results from the assault a year later, after my son suffered from debilitating migraine headaches, tongue numbness, and severe sharp head pain and lots of doctor appointments, a neurologist at Akron Children’s Hospital diagnosed my son with HNT Syndrome, and he now suffers from permanent nerve damage to his neck caused by the assault in the classroom by the known bully. It is unbearable to see my son suffer from these attacks, and to know this will last a lifetime for him. And as far as the emotional damage from the years of ongoing bullying that went without consequences, there just isn’t enough time, or words to describe what it has done to my son. I thank God every day that he and I have an amazing relationship so he feels safe to share with me how he is feeling!

I fully support Representative Dave Greenspan’s House Bill 310 Anti-bullying/Anti-hazing Act one hundred percent, and if this bill had been in effect when my son attended middle school, he and our entire family’s lives would be so very different from what they are today! We need to hold the schools accountable, to hold the bullies accountable in order to deter them from ever even thinking about bullying a second time. Our children have the right to a public education, to know that they are being heard by their teachers, and that something is being done to help the bullies stop bullying, and so they can go to school feeling safe!

I thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of my son, and my entire family who have all been affected by this.

Melanie Moore