

As a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor in the state of Ohio I support the passage of SB 144. We must educate school staff, students, and parents on the harm that bullying inflicts. We must provide avenues for this abuse to be reported and make those in authority accountable for reporting such incidents. Bullying attacks the essence of humanity. It inflicts harm on our view of self and our view of others. It sets stage for isolation and disrupts the basic need we all have as human beings which is that of connection and healthy relationships. Bullying is both covert (as in relational aggression where harm is caused to social status or relationships between those thought of as “friends”) and overt. Bullying wears different faces and creates silent suffering. If we are mandated to report suspected child abuse and neglect then minimally we as people, and those in authority such as school staff, have a responsibility to report incidents of bullying. If we are to create a kinder society, then we must stand in the gap for those who are walking silently through life because no one has been their voice.

Respectfully submitted as written testimony in support of SB 144

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