



STATE SENATOR
JOE SCHIAVONI

33RD DISTRICT

*****PRESS RELEASE*****

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 5, 2011

Contact: Tim Lytle
(614) 466-8285

Senator Schiavoni Calls for Protection Against Cyber Bullying in Schools

Bill would make improvements to existing anti-harassment policies

Columbus – State Senator Joe Schiavoni (D-Canfield) today presented sponsor testimony for Senate Bill 127, also known as the Jessica Logan Act. The bill addresses anti-harassment policies in Ohio's schools by adding acts of cyber bullying to current state law.

"These minor additions to existing law could potentially save student's lives," said Senator Schiavoni. "The emergence of texting and social networking websites have made it easier for students to bully their peers and harder for educators to do their jobs."

Jessica Logan became a victim of cyber-bullying after private pictures that she sent to her boyfriend via cell phone were shared without her permission. The Cincinnati-area teen committed suicide in July 2008 after being severely harassed by her classmates.

Under current Ohio law, school boards are required to address and train teachers to recognize some forms of harassment. But this bill would help to incorporate instances of cyber-bullying as a form of harassment.

Senator Schiavoni's bill adds the definition of an "electronic act" to school anti-harassment policies and expands existing harassment policies to include cyber-bullying. The bill would also add school buses as a location where harassment can be disciplined.

"Bullying does not stop just because a student leaves the classroom," said Senator Schiavoni. "If this law is enacted teachers and administrators will be given a clear set

of guidelines to punish acts of cyber-bullying that distract from a positive learning environment.”

The next step for Senate Bill 127 will be proponent and opponent testimony in the Senate Education Committee. Companion legislation has been introduced in the House of Representatives by Representative Teresa Fedor (D-Toledo).