

1444-S

Sponsor(s): House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Murray, Ballasiotes, Mitchell, Quall, Dickerson, Haigh, McIntire, Linville, Simpson, Reardon, Kenney, Hunt, Fisher, Conway, Hurst, Tokuda, Fromhold, Poulsen, Santos, Romero, Rockefeller, Dunshee, Gombosky, Darneille, Edwards, Skinner, O'Brien, Lantz, Wood, Miloscia, Grant, Kessler, Kirby, Jackley, Kagi, Keiser, Sommers, Ogden, Cody, Edmonds, Morris, Lovick, McDermott, Woods, Jarrett, Mastin, Cooper, Schual-Berke and Ruderman; by request of Governor Locke, Attorney General and Superintendent of Public Instruction)

Brief Description: Requiring school districts to adopt policies prohibiting harassment, intimidation, and bullying.

HB 1444-S - DIGEST

(DIGEST AS ENACTED)

Requires that, by August 1, 2003, each school district shall adopt or amend if necessary a policy, within the scope of its authority, that prohibits the harassment, intimidation, or bullying of any student. It is the responsibility of each school district to share this policy with parents or guardians, students, volunteers, and school employees.

Provides that, by August 1, 2002, the superintendent of public instruction, in consultation with representatives of parents, school personnel, and other interested parties, shall provide to school districts and educational service districts a model harassment, intimidation, and bullying prevention policy and training materials on the components that should be included in any district policy.

Declares that no school employee, student, or volunteer may engage in reprisal, retaliation, or false accusation against a victim, witness, or one with reliable information about an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

Encourages a school employee, student, or volunteer who has witnessed, or has reliable information that a student has been subjected to, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, whether verbal or physical, to report such incident to an appropriate school official.

Declares that a school employee who promptly reports an incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying to an appropriate school official, and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures in the district's policy prohibiting bullying, harassment, or intimidation, is immune from a cause of action for damages arising from any failure to remedy the reported incident.

VETO MESSAGE ON HB 1444-S

March 27, 2002

To the Honorable Speaker and Members,

The House of Representatives of the State of Washington
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to section 3, Substitute House Bill No. 1444 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to preventing harassment, intimidation, or bullying in schools;"

Substitute House Bill No. 1444 requires each school district to adopt a policy prohibiting harassment, intimidation, or bullying of any student. Our schools should be safe places, conducive to learning, where all students can learn without fear. I strongly support this bill, which will help ensure that parents, teachers and students take bullying seriously.

Section 3 of the bill would have required each school district to report all incidents resulting in disciplinary action involving harassment, intimidation, or bullying. "Incident" and "disciplinary action" are not defined terms. If every counseling session, intervention, detention or parent conference that resulted from a bullying incident were required to be reported, the burden would be overwhelming, and could serve as a disincentive for educators to take action except in the most egregious cases.

For these reasons, I have vetoed section 3 of Substitute House Bill No. 1444.

With the exception of section 3, Substitute House Bill No. 1444 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Locke
Governor