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Recently I responded to a blog - <http://blogs.ajc.com/bob-barr-blog/2011/09/02/anti-bullying-law-nonsense/> that I felt was “nonsense”. Bob Barr, a Conservative Blogger stated that anti bullying laws are nonsense.

Bully Police USA volunteers work every day to counter people who have closed minds and very little heart when it comes to understanding why anti bullying laws are needed. As a Conservative myself, I felt it was necessary to reply as Bob made all Conservatives look pretty heartless and uncaring.

Bully Police USA volunteers work to protect all children from the pain of bullying. We don't care what they look like, what they act like, where they've been or where they are going. All children have the right to a safe school environment.

My post is in italics.

Brenda High

Bob, I can understand that you don't like more government regulations but here is what you have forgotten in your argument, schools are government entities.

Since when has the "government schools" ever done anything on their own without being told what to do? In the early days of this country, children all went to community schools, paid for by the parents and the community. There was no state or federal involvement. If parents had a complaint, they went to the teacher, who might also be the Principal, and the bullying problem was taken care of.

Today, parents can complain until they are blue in the face but because their child is compelled to be in school, school administrators can take their time deciding what to do...unless there is a law.

It's true that some state laws are lacking in some common sense language. Some have inclusive language ("based on sexual orientation", color, gender, etc.) which is unfair to kids not listed, and some states don't have enough direction or too much micromanagement. Very few laws are perfect, but they are working.

A teacher once called me and was worried because she had disciplined a student for bullying and then that student angrily went about the school making false statements. I told her that in her state there is a "protection clause" against reprisal, retaliation or false accusation and that she needs to point this out to the principal with a copy of her state law. The next day she called me and told me her Principal took this very seriously and the bully was made to go to every student

she talked to and tell them she lied or she would lose the 8th Grade Presidency she had won.

Despite what you may believe, laws were not written for the kids. Laws are written for the adults in charge of the school(s). Bob, your attitude about bullying is what the problem is all about. If adults in our schools would just do their job and stop the bullying immediately, when it happens, no excuses, there would be no bullying problem. Instead, they say, "boys will be boys", "its part of growing up", and then we have adult bullies who have never learned to take responsibility for themselves, denial that there is a problem...making excuses for being lazy or incompetent.

I'm a mother of a child who killed himself because he was bullied, and assaulted in school. He developed depression, the number one cause of suicide. I assure you he was not gay. He was just a normal boy growing up in a normal home with Conservative Christian parents. Despite what the media prints, I know for a fact, good children, Christian children are bullied more than any other group. These children are gentle and don't have the nature to fight back. Well, I could go on and on. I don't expect you to change your mind-set, but for those who need more information on their state law, please feel free to visit www.BullyPolice.org or my healing website, www.JaredStory.com.

On Thursday, October 23rd, 2004, The Scottsdale Tribune published an editorial called, "*Wrong way to tame bullies*".

The writer felt that a law against bullying in Arizona wasn't needed, as the bullying problem could take care of itself at the local level. He commented, "*...teachers and parents must take reports of bullying seriously. They must be able to distinguish between harmless teasing and malicious taunts and threats – or worse. That requires not another law, but conscientious, caring parents, teachers and administrators.*"

The problem is that very few schools are doing anything. Schools must be prodded and poked along to take any action setting School District policy and finding good anti bullying programs.

I was given permission to do a special editorial rebuttal to the Scottsdale Tribune (Arizona). Since there was a lot of positive feedback afterwards, I'm sure this article made a difference and changed some minds.

"Yes, I'm making a plea for the Legislature to outlaw schoolyard bullying."

I commend the Editorial writer of, "Wrong way to tame bullies" November 23rd Editorial, on his insight into the problem of bullying. He is beginning to see the depth and severity of the problem. It is for this very reason that a

law is needed. Unless an anti-bullying law is mandated, schools have no obligation, or power to turn school violence around. Relying on schools to willingly dedicate classroom efforts and disciplinary practices along with accepting the responsibility for the safety of our children when they are in school, has not been embraced by schools on their own. Moreover, there is confusion amongst the parents, teachers and administrators about what the definition of bullying is or how to deal with it when it occurs.

According to the report, "Bullying Prevention IS Crime Prevention" by Fight Crime: Invest in Kids (www.fightcrime.org), children who have been bullied are five times more likely to be depressed, bullied boys are four times more likely to be suicidal and bullied girls are eight times more likely to suicidal. My son, Jared, (JaredStory.com) was one of those statistics. He became depressed because of bullying as well as an assault inside an unwatched gymnasium. Jared died by suicide on September 29 1998.

Recent school shootings and the publicity they have received has not motivated schools to step in either. A law would provide the motivation that schools need to actively, consistently, and effectively deal with this issue. At this time, schools have policies that are not consistently enforced and anti-bullying curriculum and practices are just suggestions that teachers may use, if they are personally interested. Kids have nowhere to turn and they know it! A law would give schools the power to do something about a bullying problem. Right Now, all a student can hope is that it goes away on its own. The practice of "Zero Tolerance" has penalized

kids for defending themselves. The victim becomes a victim again and kids take the abuse in silence.

We can wait for all School Districts to make policies concerning bullying, but they will take their direction from the State Superintendent's office and the State Superintendent's office takes their direction from lawmakers. We as citizens desire this type of top-down authority, as the bottom-up self-initiatory laws usually promote confusion and eventually individuals will question the authority of the local agency to set those laws. Schools will only do what they are mandated to do.

The job of lawmakers is get the ball rolling by defining what bullying is, what the basics rules and regulations should be and then they would send the law to the State Superintendent's office. The State Superintendent would develop a model policy for the schools to follow as well as gather anti bullying programs that are working around the U.S.A. The School District's Board of Education would then adopt their own policy according to the law and take a proactive approach by finding the anti bullying program of their choice. All of this can be done within a reasonable time set by law. However, time is of the essence! It's been four years since Columbine. How long will we wait to help the children, who are being bullied, before we do something?

Put yourself in the shoes of a victim of bullying. Every day a child is bullied is an eternity to them. We worry about terrorists coming into our

country and doing us harm. A victim of bullying walks into their school each day knowing their terrorist could strike any moment and destroy their wounded spirit again, and again. How long can a child “play on the freeway dodging cars” before the experience finally becomes too much and they go over the edge?

Some of you know exactly what I am saying, and others have witnessed bullying. Some of you were even the perpetrators of bullying. Stopping the bullying NOW will help everyone, the victim, the bully, and the long-term effects of bullying that can come years later. Bullying is a lifetime sentence that you never forget and some will, or have, never gotten over it.

Yes, I’m making a plea for the Legislature to outlaw schoolyard bullying, because failure to act now only guarantees more bullying and more violence. It’s time that every school in Arizona has clear direction to stop the hurt and pain that goes on every day in a place where our children should feel safe and secure.

~Brenda High, Founder & Co-Director, Bully Police USA

In 2004, Arizona’s Anti Bullying Law failed to get through a committee and died there. The next year, Donna Flanigan, (BPUSA Secretary), and I worked with that Committee Chairman to release the Anti Bullying Bill to a vote. It passed in 2005 and received a B- grade. See Arizona’s law by going to www.BullyPolice.org/az_law.html.