



To: the Honorable Members of the Iowa House of Representatives

Date: May 13, 2015

Re: Senate File 345 relating to state and school anti-bullying policies

Position: OPPOSE

ParentalRights.org has serious concerns regarding the impact of SF 345 on Iowa's families. We are concerned, first, that this bill would give authority to the state to monitor personal comments made by students via social media or electronic devices outside of school hours, when those students are under the care of their parents. We doubt the State would agree to such monitoring by the parents during the hours the child is in school, though it is the parents and not the State who are the primary care-giver for the child.

We are further concerned that the procedure for notifying parents of alleged victims or perpetrators of bullying can be excepted at the discretion of a single school official or the student himself. Such an exception without any measure of evidence required or judicial review eliminates the presumption that parents act in the best interest of their child and threatens a parent's right to direct the education, upbringing, and care of their child.

Most especially, however, we are deeply concerned that Subsection 9(b) would grant to a school official authority over students who are not even enrolled in the public school – including home schooled students or students of private schools – if the student is accused of bullying. This authority comes into play whether or not any evidentiary standard is met to indicate that the accused is actually guilty of bullying, those allowing for an instance where an actual bully could falsely accuse his victim of bullying and let the school system do his bullying for him.

For these reasons, we urge you to OPPOSE Senate File 345 on anti-bullying procedures.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Bentley".

James H. Bentley
Executive Director