



The Senate of The State of Texas

Senator José Menéndez

District 26

February 19, 2016

The Honorable Dan Patrick
Office of the Lieutenant Governor
P.O. Box 12068
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Lt. Governor Patrick:

As the Senate looks ahead to the 85th legislative session, it is imperative that our agenda of investigations include bullying and cyberbullying in our schools. I am respectfully requesting that you name a Senate Select Committee on Bullying. This issue is pervasive in our schools across Texas. It merits serious investigation by the Texas Senate.

On December 14, 2015, I met with Leo Vasquez. His son, Matt, had been repeatedly harassed online through anonymous social media accounts. The vitriolic language spewed was simply appalling. Among other attacks, he was bullied for having been diagnosed with leukemia. We worked with school officials and law enforcement but were told current law was not sufficient. Then on January 4th, the ultimate tragedy struck another family in San Antonio. After extensive, inescapable, and vile online harassment directed at David Molak, a 16 year-old student with all the potential in the world, took his own life. It has shaken our San Antonio community to the core.

Both the Molak family and the Vasquez family tried to seek justice and relief from bullying through their schools and law enforcement. Unfortunately, they were told the law simply was not written in a way that the police nor school administrators could track down and bring to justice the perpetrators. No student deserves to be treated like David Molak and Matt Vasquez. Moreover, no student should be afraid to attend class for being harassed or threatened. As a result of these two instances and many more that we are receiving, some local school districts are undergoing an intense reevaluation on how to prevent and combat bullying in schools.

I have publicly pledged to file and pass cyberbullying legislation called 'David's Law,' in honor of the Molak family. My office has begun to research harassment statutes in other states. However, because this issue exists in every school district in Texas, this prestigious body should study this issue thoroughly so as to produce the best legislation possible. I am strongly urging you to name a Senate Select Committee on Bullying, with utmost urgency. We owe it to our students and our families to get this right.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "José".

Senator José Menéndez
26th District of Texas

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