

STATE SENATOR • DEBORAH CHERRY • 26TH DISTRICT

Cherry Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 5, 2008

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Senator Cherry Meets with Grand Blanc Students to Discuss Passage of Matt's Safe School Law

Cherry Echoes Students' Call for Action on Anti-Bullying Bills

LANSING—Yesterday Senator Deb Cherry (D-Burton) met with students from Grand Blanc East Middle School to discuss the status of House Bills 4091 and 4162, anti-bullying legislation known as Matt's Safe School Law. The 11 sixth graders were members of the school's student council, and they came to Lansing to turn in a petition calling for action on the bills that they had circulated around their school.

"With more technology like MySpace, YouTube and camera phones at kids' fingertips, bullying is getting worse rather than better, as has the viciousness and violence of the behavior," said Sen. Cherry. "These kids from Grand Blanc and their classmates know what my colleagues and I have been saying all along: no one should have to endure that type of treatment just to get an education."

HB 4091 and 4162 would require schools to adopt a policy that prohibits harassment or bullying at school. Later in the day yesterday, the Senate Education Committee voted out both bills out of committee, which means they could be passed into law before the end of the year. Sen. Cherry is a cosponsor of Senate Bill 107, the Senate version of Matt's Safe School Law.

"I am very impressed with the level of engagement of these kids, and I hope they will continue to be so directly involved in shaping public policy that affects them as students," Cherry said. "And I am very pleased that their visit helped spark action on the bills to get them out of committee and before the Senate for a full vote, which could happen as soon as next week."

According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, as many as half of all children are bullied at some time during their school years, and at least 10% are bullied on a regular basis. Under Matt's Safe School Law, schools would be required to implement a bullying policy that defines the behavior and puts in place a policy that outlines the consequences of such behavior. This updated version of the bill also extends the policy to internet bullying.

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Elected to the Senate in 2002 and 2006, Senator Cherry is a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, serving as Minority Vice Chair on the Subcommittees for Community Health and Retirement. She is also a member of the Subcommittee on Capital Outlay.