



MISSOURI SENATE

Jeff Smith
4th Senate District

JEFFERSON CITY

CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 329
JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101

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Contact: Stacy Morse
(573) 751-3599

State Senator Jeff Smith Proposes Bill to Protect Students from School Bullying

JEFFERSON CITY — Senator Jeff Smith, D-St. Louis, is proposing a bill to protect Missouri children from bullying at school — including bullying in the form of racial, religious, sexual, or other types of discrimination.

Senator Smith recently filed [Senate Bill 132](#), which would expand Missouri schools' anti-bullying policies to include discrimination or any action that substantially interferes with a student's educational performance or a school's safe and orderly operation.

"All students deserve a safe learning environment," Sen. Smith said. "Unfortunately, bullying is a very real and growing problem and we need to curb it where it generally occurs — at school."

The proposed legislation would require school districts to adopt policies prohibiting bullying, including a definition of bullying and procedures for reporting acts of bullying, responding to confirmed incidents of bullying, and conducting prompt investigations. The measure would also require anti-bullying policies are made public, and ensure employees and volunteers receive training on anti-bullying policies.

Under the proposal, the State Board of Education would develop model anti-bullying policies to assist school districts no later than Sept. 1, 2010.

"Bullying can adversely affect a student's performance, self-esteem, and sometimes result in tragic consequences," Sen. Smith said. "Research shows that when there is a commitment by schools, teachers, students and parents, bullying can be drastically reduced, and student safety increased."

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