

Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations

The Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations' Board of Directors announced today their full support of Idaho SB 1358 known as the anti-bullying bill to protect Idaho's school children. The Board indicated that although it is already against Idaho law to bully another student in Idaho schools, this bill both expands and covers areas presently not addressed in the current legislation.

Senate Bill 1358 requires every school district to have its own anti-bullying policy, provides for teacher training, makes sure teachers and school staff know that they are expected to intervene and keep kids safe when they see bullying occur, and very importantly the bill sets penalties for cyberbullying.

The Task Force has learned that the Idaho State Department of Education receives weekly complaints from parents because some schools will not take action when their children are bullied.

"We witness tragedy after tragedy across America when a young person commits suicide often from being bullied for weeks and months and no one intervenes," said KCTFHR president Christie Wood. "As a police officer, I often see reports of this growing tragedy," Wood continued. "With Idaho ranking 4th in the United States with the highest suicide rate, we can no longer delay action to support such measures as SB 1358," stated Task Force secretary Tony Stewart. "On behalf of the KCTFHR Board, I wish to express our appreciation and gratitude to Idaho state senators Nicole LeFavour, John Goedde and Shawn Keough as well as Idaho state representatives Brian Cronin, Christy Perry and Mack Shirley for co-sponsoring this very important anti-bullying bill," continued Stewart.

The KCTFHR urges citizens to call their Idaho state legislators and urge the passage of this vital piece of legislation. The Idaho Senate Judiciary and Rules Committee will hold a public hearing on SB 1358 this Wednesday at 1:30 PM.