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**Mike Stagg**  
At-Large

## Lafayette Democrats Disappointed in Acadiana House Delegation

Lafayette, LA - At its first meeting since the vote, Lafayette Democrats expressed their disappointment that State House members voting to first strip, then to kill an Anti-Bullying bill that would have dramatically improved the lives of children throughout this state. The committee issued this statement:

"HB 112 aimed to address the growing problems in Louisiana schools and throughout the country of children being incessantly bullied to the point where they are contemplating — and sometimes succeeding — in committing suicide.

"Kids who are perceived to be gay, whether they are or not, are being bullied at an alarming rate. This targeting often causes feelings of isolation and shame which can prevent them from reaching out to parents and teachers. And it is not only bullying aimed at kids perceived to be gay — children with actual or perceived mental or physical disabilities are also being targeted. Administrators and teachers can often overlook these situations as just normal "taunting" but in fact it is causing long term harm to many children.

"Testimony presented at the hearings on this bill clearly showed that enumerating the characteristics and forms of bullying is essential if the goal is to protect all children. States and localities with such enumerations of unacceptable behaviors have lower rates of bullying and its consequences, including suicide rates.

"No one in the Acadiana Delegation supported HB 112 when it was considered by the full House. First the bill was amended to take out the types of bullying and every member of the Acadiana Delegation voted for this amendment virtually killing the bill. The bill later was stripped further via amendment and then ultimately failed to pass.

"It is a sad day in our state and in Acadiana when we can't come together and protect children — yes, even children who may be gay.

"Lafayette Democrats call on the legislature and especially the Democratic members to pass a fully inclusive bill in next year's session. Until that time, we call on our school systems to insure that ALL children are able to attend school free from harassment, intimidation and persecution for any reason including actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression and mental or physical disabilities."

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**For additional information & reporting on this bill please visit the following links:**

<http://www.theind.com/news/8335-bully-bill-demise-stirs-discord-among-dems>

<http://www.thetowntalk.com/article/20110522/NEWS01/105220322/Hasten-Religion-mixed-politics-makes-ugly-soup>

<http://cenlamar.com/2011/05/30/what-is-the-louisiana-family-forum/>

<http://cenlamar.com/2011/05/30/former-la-legislator-speaks-out-against-the-louisiana-family-forum/>