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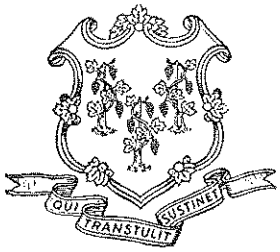

State of Connecticut

SENATE

Chair
Banks Committee
Veterans' Affairs Committee
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Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee
Transportation Committee

TESTIMONY OF STATE SENATOR CARLO LEONE RE:
HB 5564 AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL SAFETY

Good Morning Chairs Sen. Stillman, Rep. Fleischman and Ranking members Sen. Boucher, Rep. Ackert and members of the Education committee. I want to thank you for considering **HB 5564 An Act Concerning School Safety** and specifically for including sections 4, 5, and 6 on the establishment and submission of safe school climate plans and its importance in reducing bullying behavior in our schools.

Last year, in in my community and nearby, the effects of bullying behavior has led to suicides in our schools. In one extreme case, after the suicide, it was made public that the bullying behavior was known to many for far too long but no direct intervention occurred. Rather than submit to the ongoing behavior, this student chose to end his life. It never should have happened. But it did, and we must act.

I believe we must do all we can to prevent the harmful effects and behaviors that result from bullying. This behavior leads to isolation, depression, fear, even aggression and retaliation. Ultimately and to more times than necessary if unaddressed, it leads to suicide.

The measures put forth in HB 5564 require the submission of a plan for the schools on what needs to be done and shared with students and administrators. If the plan is rejected it must simply be resubmitted until approved and again shared so that all can know its effects, and more importantly, what do when it manifests in our schools.

I thank you for your consideration, and I offer my support in passage of this important piece of legislation.