

I fully endorse Senate Bill 1035: *An Act Concerning Bullying in the Work Place*. I testified before Senator Gomes, Representative Terzyak, and several members of the Labor Committee in support of this bill on March 5, 2015.

I am a former state employee with more than 21 years as a public service professional with several state agencies: Department of Public Utility Control, Department of Public Health, and Department of Social Services. It was not until I made a lateral transfer to the Office of the Healthcare Advocate (OHA) did I truly understand how good state employees can be emotionally and mentally disfigured by leadership and management.

I provided the following testimony:

- Recommendations to improve workplace systems was met with opposition by leadership with loud tirades about "being the only one who finds fault with the system".
- Slamming of doors, blocking employees from exiting offices, offensive language with regard to an individual's race, sexual orientation and/or disability.
- Placed on paid administrative leave from January 28, 2013 through May 27, 2013 for several statute violations that included misuse of state systems; the four-month paid administrative leave (at full salary and benefits) violated New England Health Care Union – Local 1199 contract (pages 31, 33, 1nd 37).
- State issued computer manipulated to send e-mails on the day of my mother's funeral and used those e-mails against me in the grievance/arbitration process.
- Upon winning the arbitration agreement (March 13, 2014 – to be made whole minus 30-day suspension), I returned to OHA with the expectations to perform assigned duties. After becoming a Union Delegate, I was investigated again for misuse of systems, in which this time was calling physicians and therapists to make, change or cancel appointments for my children and myself and cancel services for my deceased father.
- Made to provide more than necessary proof to have an Intermittent FMLA approved to treat my Systemic Lupus Erythematosus. Was repeatedly asked to provide doctor information, complete additional paperwork, etc. so that they can "check" to make sure I am not committing fraud. This condition was diagnosed in 1994 and in my personnel file since 1998. I went 12 years in remission (2000-2012), but started to have severe symptoms due to the stress caused by being placed on leave, terminated, and grievance process.
- After submitting my resignation letter, felt coerced to sign a stipulated agreement between the Office of Labor Relations, the Human Resource Representative for OHA, NEHCU-1199 Representative, and myself to not file suit or human rights complaint against the state or OHA in exchange for a resignation in "good standing". I resigned because of the toxic work environment increased my stress levels and aggravated my Systemic Lupus, as well as caused me to undergo mental health therapy to address suicidal thoughts.
- Lateral transfers blocked and interviews canceled for no reasons after the "stipulated agreement" was signed for positions that I was well qualified.
- OHA has spent more than \$250,000 with time, resources, and repayment of salary in my case alone; there are three additional arbitration cases in process, in which one case is on its eighth day with no end in sight.
- Witnessed the administrative leave and subsequent termination of an employee six months before retirement; eventually signed a similar stipulated agreement to not file suit or human rights complaint.

Over the years, I have witnessed managers/supervisors being disrespectful to employees, but never to the extent that the leadership of OHA has taken it: termination of 5 out of 12 employees, forced resignation of program manager, manipulation of Commission on Health Equity to provide vote of no confidence for Executive Director, creation of unnecessary management position(s) to give promotions to unqualified individuals, etc.

I am willing to help shape this bill to save the emotional and mental health of any employee who has been berated by those who feel that they have the right to do so. I am in support of this bill that will hold accountable everyone in the workforce to report and prevent verbal, emotional, mental, and physical acts of bullying in the work place.

Respectfully,

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March 5, 2015