

House Bill 740 expands reporting requirement and creates additional bureaucracy for no obvious purpose. It creates another form to be filled out and a report to be generated for MSDE. An additional report, compiling information from the county board reports, must be produced by MSDE for two State legislative committees. The initial "victim of harassment or intimidation forms" will likely have to be filled out by teachers, who are most likely to witness or hear about incidents of harassment and intimidation. Teachers have enough demands on their time without the State imposing new demands. Local school systems already have plans in place to adequately deal with harassment.

There is no doubt that harassment and intimidation occur daily in Maryland's public schools, but these incidents are addressed by very capable teachers and school administrators and the workgroup convened by MSDE. While we all want safe schools, the objectives outlined by House Bill 740 are already being undertaken at the State and local level. Moreover, on April 27, 2004, I signed into law Chapter 222 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2004 (House Bill 1288 - Education - Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support Program), which promotes a proven method in this State for reducing disciplinary problems - some of which involve incidents of harassment and intimidation.

For the above stated reasons, I have vetoed House Bill 740.

Very truly yours,
Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.
Governor

House Bill No. 740

AN ACT concerning

Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2004

FOR the purpose of requiring ~~each county board of education to create a program for reporting~~ the State Department of Education to require a county board to report certain incidents against certain students; authorizing certain persons to file a report regarding certain incidents; requiring ~~each county board~~ the State Department of Education to create a standard victim of harassment or intimidation report form; providing for the contents and distribution of a certain form; requiring a county board to submit ~~copies~~ summaries of a certain form to the State ~~Board~~ Department of Education on or before a certain date each year; requiring a county board to delete identifying information from certain forms under certain circumstances; requiring the State ~~Board~~ Department of Education to submit a certain report on or before a certain date each year to certain committees consisting of certain information relating to victim of harassment or intimidation reports filed with county boards; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally relating to reporting incidents of harassment or intimidation of students at public schools.

BY adding to
Article - Education