

# ***Let's Pass the Healthy Workplace Bill for Massachusetts!***

Stop Workplace Bullying and Abusive Supervision  
Support Massachusetts Senate Bill No. 699, a/k/a Healthy Workplace Bill

Senate Bill No. 699 (Sen. Joan Menard, sponsor) – “An Act addressing workplace bullying, mobbing, and harassment, without regard to protected class status” -- provides targets of severe workplace bullying with a legal right to seek damages and encourages employers to prevent bullying from occurring.

***Workplace bullying: The targeted, malicious, health-endangering mistreatment of a worker by a supervisor or co-worker.***

## **Survey Says...**

A 2007 national survey by Zogby International and the Workplace Bullying Institute found that:

- 37% of workers have experienced workplace bullying
- 62% of employers who received complaints about workplace bullying either ignored the problem or made it worse
- 64% of bullying targets eventually are pushed out of their jobs
- 73% of workplace bullies are supervisors

## **Common Bullying Behaviors**

- false accusations of mistakes and errors
- yelling, shouting, and screaming
- exclusion and the “silent treatment”
- withholding resources and information necessary to the job
- behind-the-back sabotage and defamation
- use of put-downs, insults, and excessively harsh criticism
- unreasonably heavy work demands

## **Workers Suffer Severe Harm**

- stress disorders of all types
- clinical depression
- high blood pressure
- cardiovascular disease
- impaired immune systems
- symptoms consistent with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- destructive impact on family and personal relationships

## **Bullying Hurts Employers and Organizations, Too**

- Reduced productivity
- Lower morale
- Higher absenteeism and turnover
- Increased employee benefit costs

## **We Need a Workplace Bullying Law -- We Need Senate Bill No. 699**

In Massachusetts, most targets of workplace bullying often find themselves without legal protections. Senate Bill No. 699, the **Healthy Workplace Bill**, fills this huge gap in the law:

- The HWB provides workers with a legal claim for malicious bullying behavior that has caused physical or psychological harm.
- The HWB imposes liability on both individual aggressors and employers, but it allows employers to minimize liability by preventing and responding to bullying situations.
- The HWB includes provisions that discourage weak or frivolous claims.

## **The Healthy Workplace Bill is about**

- Affirming human dignity and the right to do our jobs without disabling interference.
- Encouraging employers to prevent behaviors that destroy productivity and morale.
- Supporting public health by reducing mistreatment that harms workers and their families and adds costs to our public benefits and health care system.

## **What You Can Do**

- Contact your state senator and state representative, and urge them to support S.B. 699.
- Urge your friends to do the same.
- Join the Massachusetts Healthy Workplace Advocates, a new grassroots coalition rallying support for passage of the Healthy Workplace Bill.

For more information contact:

David Yamada\*  
Professor of Law  
Suffolk University Law School  
120 Tremont Street  
Boston, MA 02108  
617-573-8543; [david\\_yamada@yahoo.com](mailto:david_yamada@yahoo.com)

Gregory Sorozan\*  
President & National Vice-President  
SEIU/NAGE Local 282  
159 Burgin Parkway Quincy, MA 02169  
617-376-7232; [gsorozan@nage.org](mailto:gsorozan@nage.org)

\*Affiliations for identification purposes only. David Yamada is one of the nation's leading authorities on workplace bullying and author of the Healthy Workplace Bill. Gregory Sorozan is a leader in the fight to enact protections against workplace bullying through labor advocacy and legislation.

April 2009