



NEWS RELEASE

ELIZABETH WITMER, M.P.P.
Kitchener-Waterloo

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Witmer to Take Decisive Action on Bullying

Will Introduce Comprehensive Anti-Bullying Bill

(Queen's Park, Toronto) – Today, Elizabeth Witmer, MPP Kitchener-Waterloo, announced that she will be introducing a comprehensive bullying prevention bill designed to combat bullying in Ontario schools and provide a safe and secure environment for our students.

“This will be Ontario’s only piece of legislation designed with the sole purpose of comprehensively addressing the growing problem of bullying in our schools,” said Witmer. “This bill is the result of research and consultations with parents, students and educators over the past two years.”

A 2010 survey of grade 12 students by the Ontario Student Trustees’ Association found 46% had either been the victim or perpetrator of bullying. According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, one third of students have bullied others, while one third has been bullied.

The *Anti Bullying Act, 2011*, addresses four critically deficient areas of current provincial law and policy as they pertain to school safety: reporting/investigating, accountability, education/publicity and remedial programs.

“I believe that we must make significant improvements in these four areas in order to tackle this serious problem and the devastating consequences of bullying,” said Witmer. “This bill focuses on prevention, accountability and awareness. It provides for a formalized process, clear responsibilities and resources for victims and perpetrators.”

The bill will require the Ministry of Education to incorporate bullying prevention into the provincial curriculum starting in Kindergarten. The bill also enshrines into law, “Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week,” which Witmer introduced as a resolution in February 2010.

“I believe this bill is a significant step forward in creating an anti-bullying culture throughout our education system,” said Witmer. “This bill will ensure that our students, parents and educators are provided with a strategy to raise awareness and prevent bullying, a process to resolve it and the data to learn from it.”

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