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Anker Introduces Legislation to Launch Comprehensive Bullying Awareness Website

Pictured left: Legislator Anker meets with Robin Merlo of New York State Families Against Bullying at the organization's 2013 Stand Up Against Bullying annual Walk-a-Thon.

Riverhead, NY; March 2014- Suffolk County Legislator Sarah Anker has introduced legislation to launch a new bullying awareness website providing support and guidance for children who are, or have been, bullied. The legislation will be submitted at the March 4th General Legislature meeting.

“According to 2010 Bullying Statistics, 160,000 children miss school each day for fear of being bullied,” said Legislator Anker, County Chairwoman of Education and Information Technology Committee. “Having been a victim of bullying myself, I understand how important it is to speak up. I’ve worked closely with many bullying awareness groups including *New York State Families Against Bullying* and *Get a Voice*, supporting their efforts to get the word out on what students, parents and schools can do to prevent and overcome bullying.”

Legislator Anker will be working with Suffolk County’s Information Technology Department to create the new website, and she will partner with the county’s Department of Health, Youth Bureau and the Suffolk County Police Department, which have ongoing bullying awareness programs.

As of July 1, 2012, the New York State Dignity Act mandates that all schools must designate a point person, known as a Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC), to assist students who feel that they are being bullied. Concerned that many residents are unaware of the mandate, Legislator Anker was inspired to educate families about available anti-bullying resources. Anker stated that the county’s website will list helpful information, including details pertaining to the New York State Dignity Act on its website, which will be updated by the Department of Health.

“When it comes to bullying, it’s all about speaking up,” said Anker. “Cyber bullying has increased dramatically and the county has the opportunity to help intervene. I’m looking forward to facilitating the website to help prevent the emotional scars that bullying can leave and possibly save a child’s life,” said Anker.