



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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VALLEE SPEARHEADS ANTI-BULLYING ADVOCACY

Hosts Franklin Teenangels at State House to Discuss Anti-bullying Measures

BOSTON—Representative James E. Vallee (D-Franklin) today hosted at his State House office a vocal group of the strongest lobbyists against bullying: middle school students. The Franklin Teenangels—a contingent of 7th and 8th graders from Franklin’s three middle schools—met with Vallee to play their part in the legislative process by sharing what they’ve learned about cyberbullying and its effects on its victims.

“I am so proud to have a group of such motivated, committed students like the Teenangels in my community,” said Vallee. “We can’t, of course, legislate what parents should be teaching at home – courtesy, respect, and the Golden Rule – but we can put a plan in place to help school administrators and teachers swiftly and effectively address bullying if it does occur in their classrooms. What the Teenangels are doing for their peers, teachers, and parents is an important step toward ending the bullying we too often see in our schools, and now online.”

The Teenangels’ visit to the State House comes as the Legislature considers a bill aimed at combating bullying. Senate bill 2283, *An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools*, is slated for debate by the Senate on Thursday, and will then head to the House of Representatives for consideration. S. 2283 contains provisions Vallee sponsored as a stand-alone bill, including a requirement that all school districts develop and implement a bullying prevention and intervention plan.

The Franklin Teenangels is a chapter of the national program Wiresafety.org, and is the only active chapter of its kind in Massachusetts. The group consists of 17 middle school students being trained in all aspects of online safety, privacy, and security. The program, according to

Dean College professor and Franklin Teenangels co-director Lisa Keohane, is designed for students to run unique programs in schools to spread the word about responsible and safe Internet surfing to other teens, parents, and teachers.

“Our Teenangels chapter is all about empowering our kids to make a change,” said Keohane. “Our students know more about bullying and cyberbullying than any adult, because they witness or experience it firsthand. Meeting with Rep. Vallee is a great step in the process of fostering greater awareness of bullying, helping victims, and working on prevention. Today, the Franklin Teenangels learned about the legislative process and how important a part of it they really are.”

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