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News From the Capitol

Sen. Bruce Anderson <brucea@senate.mn>

Fri, Mar 13, 2015 at 2:30 PM

To: Senator Bruce Anderson <sen_bruce_anderson_list@senlistserv.senate.mn>



March 13, 2015

NEWS FROM THE CAPITOL

Protecting at risk children

On Thursday, the Minnesota Senate unanimously passed [House File 8](#), which fast tracks two of the key recommendations from the Governor's Task Force on the Protection of Children.

The bill contains two key provisions:

- * It repeals a law passed last year that prohibits the use of screened-out maltreatment reports by caseworkers.
- * It clarifies that the health and safety of children are the number one consideration when reports of neglect and maltreatment are received. This is a change from current law, which focuses on engaging the family's capabilities.

This important bill will allow caseworkers to form a more complete picture and consider all important information when making decisions. Our child protection laws should focus on the health and safety of the child above all else. My heart is broken for the innocent victims who were not protected by the system in the past. These changes are a fantastic step toward preventing tragedies in the future.

Reinforcing our children's safety and privacy at school

On Monday, Senate Republicans introduced the "Student Safety and Physical Privacy Act" to address serious concerns regarding a controversial new policy from the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL).

Last December, the MSHSL issued a new ruling allowing transgender students to play on a sports team other than the team of the student's biological sex. In effect, it allows male students who identify as female to play on female sports teams.

The ruling was met with resistance from parents and families who were worried about what effect it would have on locker room and shower situations, and how the ruling would impact private and nonpublic schools. Before the final vote on the policy, the MSHSL was presented with a petition of 6,000 names opposing the changes, but the Board proceeded to adopt the plan anyway.

In addition to parent apprehension, the ruling also appears to be in conflict with state statutes.

The "Student Safety and Physical Privacy Act," which has been assigned [Senate File 1543](#), clarifies state law and sends a message to parents that we are listening to their concerns. It is a commonsense bill that protects students' basic safety and privacy rights by codifying what high schools are already doing. It simply defines who is eligible to participate on school sports teams and requires that schools maintain facilities like bathrooms and locker rooms that are separated based on biological sex. Schools will be able to continue to meet the needs of individual students who are uncomfortable using the facility that corresponds with their biological sex by offering access to a private facility.

I support this bill as it is clear Minnesota families are unhappy with the Board's decision. A recent statewide poll from Public Opinion Strategies showed only 29 percent of respondents supported the MSHSL ruling, while 76 percent support the changes in our bill. As a father, I share your concerns about the policy. The "Student Safety and Physical Privacy Act" addresses the needs of transgender students while continuing to protect every student's safety and privacy.

Keep in Touch

I believe strongly in constituent services so please contact me with questions or comments or if you need any assistance on a state government issue.

Senator Bruce Anderson

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