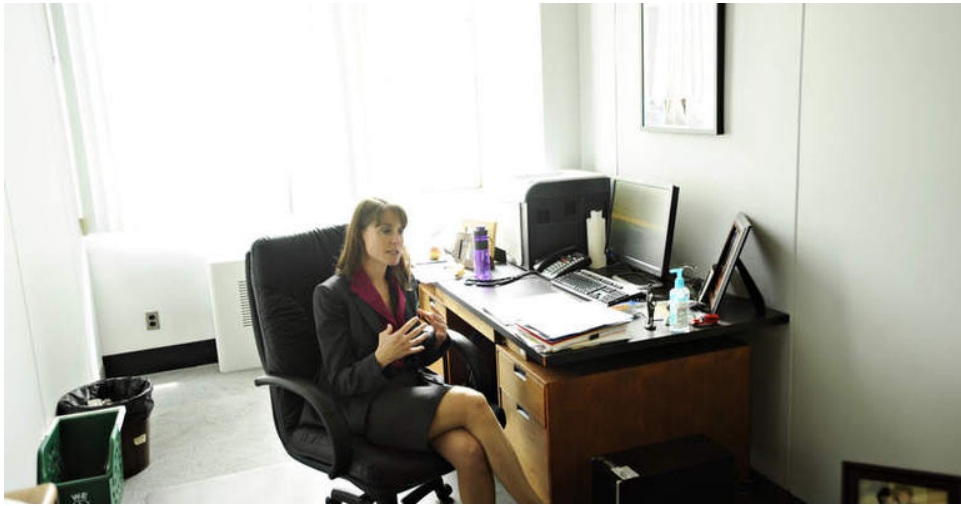


State Rep. Fine's cybullying bill ready for House debate

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17th District Rep. Laura Fine (D-Glenview) talks with a reporter in her office at the Stratton Building in Springfield, Thursday, May 16, 2013. | File

State Rep. Laura Fine's proposed legislation to help protect children from cyberbullying will go before the House of Representatives for review.

House Bill 4207 expands the definition of bullying to include cyberbullying that occurs outside of school and on computers and digital equipment not owned by schools.

Under existing law, students face discipline only when bullying takes place on school grounds, at a school activity or on a school computer.

"It is always difficult to see a child struggle with peer pressure and bullying, especially when it takes place in cyberspace leaving children and their parents feeling helpless," said Fine said, D-17, whose district covers includes Evanston, Glenview, Golf, Morton Grove, Northbrook, Northfield, Skokie, and Wilmette.

"Unfortunately, in our digital world, the challenge our young people must navigate continues to grow through the Internet, social media, cell phones and other mediums," she said.

Fine's legislation is modeled after laws in other states that have addressed the growing problem of cyberbullying, she said in a release.

"Students should not be able to get away with bullying classmates and disturbing their learning environment, whether they commit these acts at school or outside of school," she said.

The Elementary & Secondary Education Committee approved an amended bill on March 25, and state Rep. Lou Lang, D-16, is a co-sponsor.

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