

My reasons for supporting Senate Bill 1381 are to prevent unfortunate situations from happening to other children, similar to what my daughter had to endure. During my Daughters senior year, a male teacher and the head coach of our schools basketball team took it upon himself to send my daughter sexually explicit text messages. These messages ask her to join him alone in his room (during a study hall), requested that she leave her clothes at the door and then indicated that he was sexually aroused by the thought of her without clothes. He even admitted that he was a sick man in his text messages.

As soon as my daughter showed me these text messages, I went directly to the police. I did not feel confident that if I went to the school with this information, that the appropriate consequences would be taken against this teacher. The fact that I had that little confidence in the school district in an indication of how schools sweep things under the carpet to avoid any bad publicity for their school district. Any parent that has a concern about a teacher's action toward their child should be able to discuss the issue with the Superintendent/Principle of the school. All accusations should be reviewed and validated as warranted or false without repercussions on the child.

Once the detectives began their investigation, there were more girls that came forward to tell their stories of how this teacher inappropriately touched them (when they were being tutored/summer schooled) sexual comments and inappropriate gestures that were made by this teacher. As the detectives dug deeper into this teachers past it was brought to the attention of the detectives that this teacher was asked to resign from another school district because of complaints of inappropriate comments and actions while he was employed as the girl's basketball coach. (Section 11.1, iii-c) This is the heart of this bill, had these concerns been reported and dealt with correctly no additional children would have been mistreated by this teacher. Enabling this teacher to resign and not taking the correct steps to stop this teacher, this former school district "passed their trash" to my children's school district allowing him to continue on with his sick ways putting children in a very uncomfortable position.

After the investigation was opened, many teachers, janitors and security staff commented on things they had noticed over the years but never discussed with school officials. This story has a similar sound to the Sandusky case we are all watching unfold in the news. No one wants to challenge the coach that leads the team to victory.

During the hearing where this teacher was sentenced to 10 years probation, the teacher's defense for his actions was "I forgot that I was an adult". We need to ensure that we are surrounding our children, "our future", with adults that are looking out for their best interest not their own interests. Making everyone responsible for their actions and their decisions to come forward when they know a child is in danger provides accountability not only for their actions but others actions that they witness. We must make sure that we protect our children at all cost as they are our future.

As I watch the news on a weekly basis I see more reports of teachers that have engaged in relations with their students. We need to set the stage and let these teachers that use their authority to engage in relationships with children know that we are not going to sit back while they damage our children. We need to stop them and we need to make every one accountable for their actions.