

My name is Mary Mahlstadt and am a resident of Indiana. I am a college graduate and have been in the workforce for 55 years. My profession has been in sales and marketing in the healthcare profession for the last 20 years of my career.

I am supporting House Bill 6352 that will create a Fair Work Commission. It is vitally important to address this ongoing problem within our workforce. This Bill will enable employers and employees to investigate cases of workplace bullying. This Bill will streamline the process for employees to report workplace bullying instead of navigating the traditional legal system. This would hopefully address any retaliation on an employee choosing to report the bullying. Right now this is not the case and retaliation against the employee is common.

Conflict resolution is an excellent avenue to pursue that's fair to both sides. Both sides will be heard fairly and supporting documentation will be crucial. There will be a need to incorporate the company's HR department to be well trained to be impartial to this process. Oftentimes, HR personnel will side with management in order to protect their own jobs. This is a real stumbling block with the process and hopefully this will be addressed as well.

The impact of this legislation will be a step in the right direction for a problem that has gotten out of control. For me, it will mean that no one else will have to suffer through what I did the past few years. And, current employees can be assured that their jobs are protected against bullying. This will be far reaching once it moves forward.

For me as an older worker, I was harassed and bullied for over a period of 3 years with my last employer. My coworkers bullied me through ignoring me and making unfounded accusations. It was really horrible. I was finally forced to file a grievance against my supervisor according to our company's guidelines only to be retaliated against one year later with an unsubstantiated firing. In fact, my supervisor had already hired someone to replace me on the day she fired me. Since I was able to keep a very detailed paper trail with my supervisor's signature on everything, I was offered a settlement within 6 months. However, my job was gone. I still hired an attorney to consult with and get direction to survive this ordeal. Many aren't as lucky to have a company admit their errors and offer a settlement. So I feel for them and don't want anyone to go through what I did. Even though I choose not to seek further employment at this time due to my age, many are in the prime of their life and can't afford a halt in their work career due to bullying.

I hope that this bill will be a nationwide sweep of the disparities in the workplace that we have tolerated for years. I believe it needs to stop and quickly. Only this bill will move it forward for the good of all companies and their employees.

Please pass this Bill and make it a law! It is long overdue! I totally support what this will do for many!

Thank you!

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