

## Legislation Honors the Memory of Rutgers University Student Tyler Clementi

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Senator Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12) today introduced the “Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act,” legislation that for the first time would require colleges and universities to have anti-harassment policies in place. The bills introduced in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, also would provide funding for schools to establish or expand programs to prevent harassment of students.

“The tragic impact of bullying on college campuses has damaged too many young adults, and it is time for our colleges to put policies on the books that would protect students from harassment,” Lautenberg said. “While there is no way to eliminate the cruelty that some students choose to inflict on their peers, there should be a clear code of conduct that prohibits harassment. It is vitally important that all students have the opportunity to learn in a safe and secure environment.”

“In the wake of the Tyler Clementi tragedy, we should help colleges across the nation strengthen their anti-harassment programs and make campuses a more positive and safe atmosphere,” Holt said. “I thank Tyler’s family for their inspiring work to advance anti-harassment efforts and benefit students nationwide.”

The legislation is named in honor of Tyler Clementi, an 18 year-old freshman at Rutgers University who took his life in September after his roommate and another student harassed him and violated his privacy over the Internet.

Lautenberg’s and Holt’s legislation would require colleges and universities that receive federal student aid to have in place a policy that prohibits harassment of students based on their actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religion. Schools would have to distribute that policy to all students, along with information about the procedure to follow should an incident of harassment occur, and notify students of counseling, mental health, and other services available to victims or perpetrators of harassment.

The legislation would require schools to recognize cyberbullying as a form of harassment and it would create a new grant program at the U.S. Department of Education to help colleges and universities establish programs to prevent harassment of students.

The bill is supported by Garden State Equality, the Human Rights Campaign, the National Women’s Law Center, the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the Anti-Defamation League, and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund.

Cosponsors of the bill in the House include Reps. Robert Andrews (NJ-01), Frank Pallone (NJ-06), Bill Pascrell (NJ-08), Steve Rothman (NJ-09), Linda Sanchez (CA-39), Albio Sires (NJ-13)

In the Senate, the bill is cosponsored by Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Robert Menendez (D-NJ). A copy of the Senate bill, S.3960, can be viewed here:  
<http://lautenberg.senate.gov/assets/anti-bully.pdf>

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