S.1720 (Ramos)/A.6157 (Titus)

An act to amend the labor law, in relation to developing and implementing programs to prevent workplace violence in public schools

The New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) opposes the above referenced legislation and urges you negative vote.

Under current law, school districts are required to have a comprehensive school safety plan and a building level emergency response plan which must include: (1) a comprehensive district wide safety plan; (2) a non-violent conflict resolution training program; (3) enactment of policies and procedures for building security; and (4) annual safety training for both staff and students. These plans must be presented for public comment and adopted by each school board before being submitted to the Commissioner of Education. In addition, school districts are required to establish a code of conduct with procedures to assure the security and safety of students and school personnel. These include guidelines of appropriate and acceptable behavior of staff and students, procedures by which violations are determined, reported and enforced and notification with law enforcement, if necessary.

School boards take very seriously their responsibility of ensuring a safe working and learning environment. However, given the existing requirements, school districts already address the intent of this legislation, by ensuring that schools have a plan and training in place to prevent violence in the workplace. In fact, the requirements set forth by Education Law not only overlap those of the Labor Law, but are specific to the unique environment and needs of our schools and the staff and students who attend them.

In 2006, when the Workplace Violence Prevention Program was enacted, the NYS Department of Labor - Workforce New York, stated that upon examination of the Education Law and Program, the safety plan outlined in Section 2801a was better developed and more comprehensive in quelling violence than the new outlined standards.

For the reasons stated above, NYSSBA opposes this legislation and urges your negative vote. For additional information, please contact NYSSBA Governmental Relations at 518-783-0200.