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Dear Senator Meyer,

My name is Arlene Briscoe, RN-BC. I am a board certified mental health nurse. I am also a constituent from your district. I have been a mental health nurse since 1987. I am pleased that you have introduced SB 128- Electronic Bullying. I support this bill as it addresses a significantly growing problem that has been recognized, but not addressed. I work as a mental health staff nurse at a hospital in Anchorage and see daily the torment that any type of bullying creates. The hardest hit populations are middle and high school children. Cyber was a word only used in science fiction stories when I was a kid. When there were bullies at school, a child could go home and feel safe. Now with the advent of “cyber technology” a child or even an adult has no safe haven. A bully can follow a person home and greet them on their mobile phone, Facebook, Twitter or their own personal e-mail.

I have seen numerous children hospitalized endorsing suicide ideation after cyber bullying, the suffering it causes not only the child, but the entire family emotionally and financially is overwhelming. A child with substantial suicide ideation is hospitalized frequently a minimum of 10 days, with an average length of stay 2-3 weeks here in Anchorage.

Senate Bill 128 starts the process of protecting our most precious resource, our children and gives schools and families the power to protect kids not only the bullied children, but the “bullies”. Children who are identified as bullies require help too, and by identifying these kids and setting limits on these behaviors they will hopefully get the help they need to stop this entire negative cycle.

I will be in Juneau for the nurses’ fly-in, the week of February 17th and look forward to meeting you and thanking you personally for your effort.

Most Sincerely,

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