

## **Healthy Workplace Citizen Lobby Day at Illinois State Capitol on April 22, 2009**

*By Carrie Clark*

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*Announcement of Citizen Lobby Day to support legislation at the Illinois state Capitol.*

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Legislator education about Workplace Bullying is scheduled as a Citizen Lobby Day on April 22, 2009 at the Illinois State Capitol to promote both HJR 40 Taskforce on Workplace Bullying Resolution and HB 374 Abusive Work Environment Act. Both are very critical to our State and Nation's continued social development. These bills are quite timely, if not overdue. Ours is of the last industrialized cultures to ignore work abuse and the toll it takes on individuals, families, and organizations.

Workplace bullying is rampant in American labor. If you haven't yet done so, check out the WBI-Zogby data at the Workplace Bullying Institute, [www.bullyinginstitute.org](http://www.bullyinginstitute.org).

For both public and private sector employers, bullies are too expensive to ignore and to keep. Too often, employers don't know what to do about them, as there is yet no law against work abuse. Bullies can damage, if not destroy, an organization. The State of Illinois is a prime example of this, as we are still very much on the mend from our recent horrifying and embarrassing bullying experience from the top.

Opponents argue that passage of this legislation will create lawsuits. Those lawsuits are already occurring. They are poorly filed as discrimination, intentional infliction of emotional distress, workers comp claims, etc. Severely damaged targets logically seek whatever avenue for justice they can find. This litigation is often weak and can last years, be quite expensive for both sides, and is often dismissed on slight technicalities. Settlements are usually accompanied by "hush clauses," even when the "fine for immoral behavior" is coming from public funds.

Our true mission is to "recognize and prevent" work abuse before it gets to litigation. Without the threat of litigation, about 10% of the perpetrators won't knock it off, behave themselves, and follow the Golden Rule like the rest of us usually do.

Keep in mind that the burden of proof is on the target. The standard of proof is quite high and subject to expert witnessing. The bill is easy to understand. It's written by Professor David Yamada, a Suffolk University labor law professor with a top national reputation.

Opposition is based on fear and is very shortsighted. It's like putting a blue tarp over a leaky roof instead of finding the leak and fixing the hole that causes it. Illinois needs to find that leak. The research that's already been done by the Drs. Ruth and Gary Namie of the WBI and a cadre of global experts is readily available.

Healthy Workplace Advocates will get this bill passed in at least one state very soon. Social evolution is slow, but certain. Illinois can be first, but it will not be the last. This movement will sweep our nation state by state. By being first, Illinois can bring moral capital back that we recently lost, much to our shame and embarrassment. Standing up to the bullies is deeply embedded in our State's history. I think Abe would be proud if we led the way out of this form of oppression. Don't you? For more information about the Citizen Lobby Day planned for April 22, contact Carrie Clark at [carriec51@earthlink.net](mailto:carriec51@earthlink.net).

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California Healthy Workplace Advocates

Mission Statement

The Mission of the California Healthy Workplace Advocates

Is to Raise Public Awareness and Compel our State to Correct and  
Prevent Abusive Work Environment Through Legislation

Category            Lobbying, Workplace Bullying, Citizen Advocacy  
Tags                workplace bullying, citizen lobbying, illinois legislature, healthy workplace advocates, target,  
perpetrator  
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