

PETITION FOR NEW RULE

Dear OSHSB,

My name is Robert Jungers. I'll 50 this year. I have worked all of my life including some as a child in the family business and for others during the summers. I have seen many forms of work although I have been in the Mill Operation of a mine for 30 years this year.

The workplace bullying and mobbing issue is very old and I've seen it all my life. It's my understanding that rules like I'm proposing have been in place for about 20 years in other countries. I found out about these terms from a stranger on Face Book that led me to the State of Massachusetts Healthy Workplace Bill. I immediately saw the need for something like this in California since I have always lived and worked in the state.

Please take this proposal into careful consideration. We have been long suffering in the workplace and have been in desperate need of help.

Thank you
Robert Jungers

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27%

Roughly 27% of workers —

Workplace bullying is repeated, health-harming mistreatment of one or more persons (the targets) by one or more perpetrators that takes one or more of the following forms:

- Verbal abuse
- Offensive conduct/behaviors (including nonverbal) which are threatening, humiliating, or intimidating
- Work interference — sabotage — which prevents work from getting done.

Workplace Bullying

- Is driven by perpetrators' need to control the targeted individual(s)
- Is initiated by bullies who choose targets, timing, place, and methods.
- Escalates to involve others who side with the bully, either voluntarily through coercion.
- Undermines legitimate business interests when bullies' personal agendas take precedence over work itself.
- Is domestic violence at work where the abuser is on the payroll.

(from the Workplace Bullying Institute)

Survey Says

A 2014 national survey by Zogby International and the Workplace Bullying Institute found that:

- 27% of workers have experienced workplace bullying
- 72% of employers who received complaints about workplace bullying either ignored the problem or made it worse
- 56% of workplace bullies are supervisors

Common Bullying Behaviors

- False accusations of mistakes and errors
- Yelling, shouting, and screaming
- Exclusion and "the silent treatment"
- Withholding resources and information necessary to the job
- Behind-the-back sabotage and defamation
- Use of put-downs, insults, and excessively harsh criticism
- Unreasonably heavy work demands

Workers Suffer Severe Harm

- Stress disorders of all types
- Clinical depression
- High blood pressure
- Cardiovascular disease
- Impaired immune systems
- Symptoms consistent with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Destructive impact on family and personal relationships

Workplace bullying is health-endangering: targets suffer from anxiety disorders, hypertension, increased risk of heart disease, digestive problems, clinical depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder-related symptoms.

Physical Harm

Stressors, aspects of the work environment and behavior of people working there, can generate stress. Stress is the biological human response. It is physiological and real, not just imagined. Low-level stress may be necessary to compel people to act. However, severe stress which prevents rational, controlled action is negative.

Physical health indicators of and problems from stress »

Mental Harm

Bullying is often called psychological harassment or violence. What makes it psychological is bullying's impact on the person's mental health and sense of well-being. The personalized, focused nature of the assault destabilizes and disassembles the target's identity, ego strength, and ability to rebound from the assaults. The longer the exposure to stressors like bullying, the more severe the psychological impact. When stress goes unabated, it compromises both a target's physical and mental health.

Mental injuries, including suicide »

Social Harm

Humans are social animals. We routinely rely on others to make us feel human and connected. Bullying disrupts groups of co-workers. Sometimes bullies play divide 'n conquer games ordering colleagues to not help or communicate with the target. More common is the group's tendency to informally separate themselves from the target. Resentment for exposing peers to the target's misery evolves into estrangement and eventual abandonment. Co-workers don't want to be near the target lest they become the next prey.

There is research showing that witnesses suffer from bullying, too. When the bully is a co-worker, the principal weapon is to withhold approval of human contact and validation. Targets begin to doubt their sanity. Family and friends remain supportive for targets longer than co-workers.

If the bullying does not stop and the target does not stop obsessing, spouses can tire of the vicarious misery and leave the emotionally draining relationship.

(from the Workplace Bullying Institute)

WHAT IT COSTS BUSINESSES

64%

Days Missed

Percentage of people who missed 7+ days of work as a result of workplace bullying

55%

Employer Costs

Percentage of people whose employer paid more than \$1,000 for days missed due to workplace bullying

70%

Terminated Employees

Percentage of people whose employers terminated, constructively discharged, or made quit employees whose combined salaries exceed \$100,000

Workplace bullying is bad for business; it leads to decreased productivity, lower morale, increased absenteeism, and attrition.

Workplace bullying, by definition, happens at work. It interferes with the target's confidence that her or his livelihood is assured. Broad societal economic crises threaten millions of workers at the same time and impersonally. Bullying is a laser-focused, personalized economic crisis affecting the target and her or his family. When bullies have control over the targets' livelihood (as in 72% of situations), they have tremendous leverage to cause financial pain. Single parent workers are the most vulnerable.

Controlling bullies can block transfers to a safe job, can make targets so miserable that they quit (constructive discharge), or impair target health to the extent they have to quit to stop the stress from campaign of interpersonal destruction. In the U.S., losing work means losing health insurance. No job. Get sicker. Lose the ability to seek medical help.

Some economic harms

- Lost ability to be left alone to do the once-"loved job"
- Forced to transfer from loved job, often a punitive transfer (13%)
- Constructively discharged without reasonable cause (24%)
- Target quits to reverse decline in health and sanity (40%)

(from the Workplace Bullying Institute)

RESOURCES

Workplace Bullying Institute

The sole United States organization dedicated to the eradication of workplace bullying through public education, help for individuals, employer solutions, and legislative advocacy.

Minding the Workplace Blog

Professor David Yamada's Minding the Workplace blog contains news and commentary about work and employment relations, including regular updates about workplace bullying issues in Massachusetts.

<https://youtu.be/7suKni04z2M>

<https://youtu.be/Q5lvyopCAr4>