

Press Release...



FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

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Ford Introduces HR 588 and HB4228 to End Social Shaming Videos of Children

SPRINGFIELD, IL- Illinois State Representative La Shawn K. Ford, D-Chicago, has introduced two bills in the House that will combat the current trend of parents' social shaming of their children through the posting of extreme videos. Social shaming, a form of child discipline, is a trend that is currently being debated regarding its effectiveness.

“It is not the role of government to tell or force parents how to discipline their children, but it is the role of government to protect children from any form of child abuse,” said Ford. “We have to prevent cyber-bullying against children. Extreme posts in the cyberspace could have negative mental and social impacts on a child's life, hurting their ability to gain access to quality schools or quality employment.”

HR 588

(<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=588&GAID=13&GA=99&DocTypeID=HR&LegID=91678&SessionID=88>) urges Congress, consistent with the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, to pass a law prohibiting parents from cyber-bullying their children by posting messages or images on social media sites on the Internet that embarrass, intimidate, coerce, harass, or cause substantial emotional distress to their children.

HB 4228

(<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?DocTypeID=HB&DocNum=4228&GAID=13&SessionID=88&LegID=91679>) creates the offense of parental cyber-bullying, which provides that a person commits the offense when he or she: (1) is a parent or legal guardian of a minor who is under 18 years of age at the time of the commission of the offense; and (2) with the intent to discipline, embarrass, or alter the behavior of that minor, transmits, using electronic communication, any verbal or visual message posted on social media that the parent or legal guardian reasonably believes would coerce, intimidate, harass, or cause substantial emotional distress to the minor. A violation of the proposed law would be a petty offense, and if a person is convicted of parental cyber-bullying, the court shall order that person to pay for the costs of prosecution and that a portion of the fine, as determined by the court, be placed in escrow for the purchase of a certificate of deposit for use by the minor victim when he or she attains 18 years of age.

The physiological aftermath of social shaming is real and can come with tragic consequences. A 13 year old teen from Tacoma killed herself days after a shaming video was posted online of her father cutting off her hair. Police reported the teen jumped to her death from a Tacoma bridge days after the video posted.

Danette McKinley, author of the book series The Bruises from My Mother's Love, shared her dismay about the current form of social media discipline. "Social media humiliation is not a form of discipline; it is parental cyber-bullying in the worst form," said McKinley. "Devouring one's self-esteem will only cause self-hate and someday cause harm to others."

"These social media postings can also set children up for behavior health issues based on the exposure of the discipline imposed on them," said Ford. "At the time of their action, parents may not be aware of the unintended consequences of their actions. This law will be an attempt to encourage more personal and effective ways to help redirect a child's negative behavior."

Below are videos of viewers against child shaming videos:

<http://www.worldstarhiphop.com/videos/video.php?v=wshhdC10V3S4j1hpYzta>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zYpH1UIuvY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00WdrWLe66s>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1_bJH7C5s8

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oA_nf-w2i04

<http://www.worldstarhiphop.com/videos/video.php?v=wshhFB1ltv7M36xRholN>

<http://www.worldstarhiphop.com/videos/video.php?v=wshhGNI4BTLA1dZLPp5J>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_66LAzJFas&list=PLqJGKjEocscyMFIxNLVbiwQjr57i3s

<http://mediasmarts.ca/backgrounder/cyberbullying-law-fact-sheet>

For more information, contact one of Ford's constituent service offices: 816 S. Oak Park Avenue in Oak Park at [708-445-3673](tel:708-445-3673), 4800 W. Chicago Avenue in Chicago at [773-378-5902](tel:773-378-5902) or in the Stratton Office Building in Springfield at [217-782-5962](tel:217-782-5962), or visit www.lashawnford.com.