

dismissive reply that came from a school administrator with whom I was discussing the often brutal treatment heaped upon openly gay—or perceived-to-be-gay—students in schools. That was shortly after I started at this paper nearly 15 years ago. In the intervening years that children's schoolyard chant has been, in the context of how gays should deal with verbal abuse, thrown in my face by everyone from police officers to mainstream newspaper columnists.

For too many years, the attitude of many school administrators and teachers toward student-on-student harassment has been that it's a "normal" part of growing up. Gay students, like kids who are overweight or have speech problems, should learn to lighten up, ignore the taunts or fight back in the face of abuse. But as anyone who's followed this issue knows, anti-gay harassment rarely stops at name-calling. Openly gay or lesbian students can attest, along with girls who are a little too masculine, or boys who are a little too feminine, that sticks and stones are just some of the items used to pummel and ostracize those who dare to be different.

But even if we were to assume for the sake of argument that anti-gay harassment in schools rarely escalates beyond verbal taunts, the unrelenting nature of anti-gay verbal harassment, along with the sense of isolation that accompanies it, makes for an uneven playing field for gay and lesbian students who are supposed to be guaranteed the equal opportunity to learn. Speak at length with adult victims of systematic anti-gay verbal attacks committed by hateful neighbors, and you understand how ongoing harassment can make simply living in one's home unbearable. Imagine what it must be like for targeted students in the captive environment of a school. The effort and desire to learn lag far behind the simple act of trying to preserve one's dignity while keeping one eye out for the bullies behind you. That so many of these students suffer academically is not surprising.

(There is also increasing evidence that schoolyard bullying, now the subject of intense study by American, Japanese and European academics, has long-term adverse consequences for all of those involved—the bullies, the bullied and bystanders who live in fear that it may be they who are next in line for abuse if they do not conform to the whims of the mob.)

Students and parents in many districts have begged administrators to stop such harassment—even after it has escalated to physical violence, and even though some teachers and administrators themselves have taken part in the harassment. Many times, as Wisconsin student Jamie Nabozny could attest, the student being harassed is made to feel as if he or she is the culprit for having the temerity to simply be who they are.

It was in 1997 that Nabozny caused a stir in school board meetings across the country after he got fed up and sued the school district that failed to see how its inaction was affecting his rights to equal educational opportunities. He won in a landmark ruling in federal court. In a heartening after-effect, more students and their parents, emboldened by the Nabozny decision have stepped forward and are filing similar suits against their school districts for similar reasons.

Some pundits are already saying that these cases are just one more example of how destructively litigious American society has become. But these cases cannot be compared to lawsuit-obsessed citizens trying to wring money from slip-and-fall accidents or restaurants who dare to serve hot coffee which is then spilled on some klutz's lap. These cases are legitimate examples of citizens seeking redress from the judicial branch of government when the executive and legisla-

tive branches are unable or unwilling to offer equal protection to its citizens.

But court action alone will hardly solve the problem. And it's not just gay kids who are being tormented. Nor is it only gay kids who are bringing guns and knives to school to gain revenge on their tormenters. So it's heartening to hear that the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network is working with other education organizations to make sure that school administrators and other government officials continue to work toward programs and solutions for a problem that ought not ever again be covered up or dismissed.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO SIMPLIFY AND MAKE MORE EQUITABLE THE TAX TREATMENT OF SETTLEMENT TRUSTS ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO THE ALASKA NATIVE CLAIMS SETTLEMENT ACT

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 2, 2001

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce a bill to simplify and make more equitable the tax treatment of settlement trusts established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA).

This bill is the product of a unique bipartisan effort over the past two Congresses. Joining me as a cosponsors of the bill are—the Chairman of the Committee on Resources, Congressman JAMES HANSEN, the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee, Congressman NICK RAHALL, and the former Ranking Minority Member of that Committee who cosponsored this legislation in the last Congress, Congressman GEORGE MILLER.

Additionally, I am honored to join with a number of other members of Congress in urging the enactment of this bill. The cosponsors include Ways and Means Committee Members, Subcommittee Chairman AMO HOUGHTON, Ways and Means Committee, Ranking Minority Member CHARLES RANGEL, Representative DAVE CAMP, Representative J.D. HAYWORTH, Representative SCOTT MCINNIS, and Representative MARK FOLEY.

Colleagues from the Native American Caucus who are cosponsoring this bill are: the Co-chair of the Caucus along with Mr. HAYWORTH, Representative DALE KILDEE, Representative NEIL ABERCROMBIE, Representative ENI FALEOMAVAEGA, Representative MARK UDALL, Representative FRANK PALLONE, and Representative PATRICK KENNEDY.

This bill would remedy several key deficiencies in the current settlement trust provision enacted in a 1987 amendment to ANCSA. That provision authorized Alaska Native Corporations organized pursuant to ANCSA to establish, from their own resources, settlement trust funds to "promote the health, education, and welfare . . . and preserve the heritage and culture of Natives." Unfortunately, the Settlement Trust tax provision in existing law poses several significant impediments to the establishment and long-term maintenance of Settlement Trusts, and therefore, to the fulfillment of their purposes under ANCSA.

A version of this bill was included by the Ways and Means Committee in legislation last Congress that was vetoed and a version of it passed the Senate as well. This current version of the bill we are introducing today has been vetoed over the past several years with the tax writing committees of Congress in the House and Senate, the Joint Committee on Taxation and the Department of Treasury. It addresses the key deficiencies in the current law. I urge that it be included in tax-related legislation considered by the House in this session of the 107th Congress and that our colleagues join the co-sponsors of this bill in supporting this meritorious legislation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 2, 2001

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained in my district on Tuesday, May 1, 2001, and I would like the record to indicate how I would have voted had I been present.

For rollcall vote No. 90, the resolution recognizing the importance of increasing awareness of the autism spectrum disorder, I would have voted "yea."

For rollcall vote No. 91, the resolution supporting a National Charter Schools Week, I would have voted "yea."

HONORING MIKE THIESSEN

HON. GARY A. CONDIT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 2, 2001

Mr. CONDIT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor an outstanding young man from my district in California's great Central Valley—Mike Thiessen. I am proud to report he lead the Air Force Academy football team to a 9–3 season including a 41–27 win over Army and 27–13 over Navy to capture the prestigious Commander In Chief's trophy.

The list of accomplishments by this fine young man is impressive.

He was named the Air Force Academy's Player of the Year, the Mountain West Conferences' Offensive Player of the Year, and takes his place among the great option quarterbacks in Air Force Academy history. He was named Colorado's Male Athlete of the Year and was selected for the 2000 Gridiron Classic.

Mike ranked second in the MWC in total offense (218.2 average) and led the MWC in quarterback efficiency (147.0 rating) He led the team in rushing with 713 yards and 10 touchdowns and hit 112–195 passes for 1,687 yards and 13 touchdowns. He ranked 10th nationally in quarterback efficiency.

Prior to the Air Force Academy, Mike led his Johansen High School football team to the Sac-Joaquin Section semi-finals capping a stellar high school career that culminated when he was selected as one of 30 players to represent California in its annual all-star game against Texas' all-stars. Unfortunately, Mike did not get to play in that game because he was already committed to the Air Force Academy and had begun training.