

# *The Cyberbullying Law*

**CHICAGO** – Governor Rod R. Blagojevich today signed Senate Bill 2426, known as “The Cyberbullying Law,” in an effort to provide citizens new protections from electronic harassment and threats.

“The safety and well-being of our citizens is a top priority, and I am pleased to sign this bill into law today,” said Governor Blagojevich. “People in Illinois will now have added protection from cyberbullying, a serious threat in today’s increasingly technological society.”

Senate Bill 2426, sponsored by State Rep. Patrick J. Verschoore and State Sen. Ira I. Silverstein overwhelmingly passed in both the House (108-1-0) and the Senate (53-1-0). The bill is a response to the October 2006 suicide of a Missouri teenager who had received hurtful messages on the MySpace Web site from someone she thought was a boy she met online, but turned out to be a neighbor’s mother. The incident received extensive national attention, and more than 10 states have now passed laws to protect against future incidents of this nature.

This law clarifies the definition of harassing someone by using electronic communication such as the Internet and text messaging and enables the prosecution of someone who anonymously bullies in this capacity. SB 2426 becomes law January 1, 2009.

“Cyberbullying is a new, but troubling problem that needs to be addressed,” said Rep. Verschoore. “This bill takes real steps to deterring this criminal behavior and I am pleased to see the Governor sign it into law.”

“Numerous other states have taken the initiative and passed laws targeting cyberbullying. I am pleased that Illinois has joined those states, in the fight to protect its citizens against these harmful and hurtful acts,” said Sen. Silverstein