

7th March 2014

ANTI BULLYING LEGISLATION REVIEW REQUEST

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to request that the government participates in more thorough processes to reduce the likelihood of bullying in the workplace. I personally, have been subject to bullying in the workplace on a number of occasions, and have felt powerless to be able to do anything about this. For instance, typically in the workplace, you are required to follow correct grievance processes, such as address the bullying with your immediate supervisor. Sadly, for me however, it has often been my supervisor that has subjected me to this. When I have attempted to go higher up to address these issues, the higher management has backed my supervisor, even when they were very much in the wrong.

When I did not feel that higher management supported my claims of bullying, I started keeping documentation to provide evidence of the specific circumstances of bullying I was experiencing and issued these to management. Again, instead of being supported, the blame was placed upon me, and often when I spoke out against unethical practices in a professional manner, I have been subject to higher workloads and unrealistic demands over above those of colleagues and even yelled at. There are simply too many instances of bullying to even discuss.

I would like to say that my bullying experiences were isolated ones, but they were not. I have been subject to this on a number of occasions. I thought I was covered due to workplace health and safety regulations that are supposed to protect staff. However, when I had legitimate claims, the workplace generally gave some rhetoric about how they care about staff welfare, but it was just that, only words. They did not care about their treatment of staff, only about their bottom line.

I wish to note that in one team I worked for, the bullying within the team was so rife, that we all approached the Human Resources Department to note our concerns. They even brought in an external case manager to note our concerns and put in strategies to address it. However, no follow up happened after that. Nothing. So, we were all left disillusioned about the anti-bullying process. We resolved that the organisation was more concerned with protecting it's image, rather than concerning itself with the welfare of staff. It seemed they just 'ticked a box' to give the appearance of giving support. So disappointing. On another occasion, I approached the union for support. The union recognised that I had a case, and even acknowledged that the

organisation I worked for had a bullying culture. When I asked for their support to address the bullying, the response was, and I quote, “you have only received a verbal warning. You may wish to sweet talk them”. The worker for the union had also told me on the phone that it would be very difficult for me to prove that I had been subject to bullying. She said that unless my fellow colleagues were prepared to come forward and fight the organisation in a class action with me (which they were not because they were too fearful), then it was unlikely that my case would get anywhere because it would be my word against management’s. She suggested, that I was probably better leaving the organisation.

The reality I have experienced with bullying is even if you are right, if you happen to speak out against inappropriate practices (especially against management), then your days within the workplace are numbered, even if you are doing your work effectively.

I really do not know what the answers are, but I have shared my story because I do not believe that I am alone. I would really like to see more checks and balances. I wish there was a body from government that could come into workplaces on a regular basis and speak with staff about what is ‘really’ happening in the workplace, not hear the hogwash that is delivered by bosses that are looking after their own self-interests. I welcome the change where everyone legitimately feels safe in the workplace, and do not have to succumb to poor practices because that is the accepted culture. Might I add, that the bullying I have experienced has not only been at the hands of management, but colleagues with their own agendas and self-interests too. Again, I think a government regulatory body would help here too. I am still experiencing bullying again today from a colleague, but she has been so convincing with management that she is a team player, so I try to protect myself as best I can because I have bills to pay, I refuse to leave another workplace based on this, and if I were to say anything I doubt I would be believed because she gives the appearance of being a nice person.

I thank you for taking the time to read my response and hope in some way my story might contribute to real change in legislation at a governmental level.