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***Texas PTA Speaks Out for Stronger Cyberbullying Laws***

***Supports David's Law***

AUSTIN– Today Texas PTA joined Senator Jose Menendez, D-San Antonio, the family of David Molak, a young San Antonio teen who committed suicide after severe cyberbullying, and the Vasquez family whose son Matt, suffering from Leukemia, was horrifically cyberbullied and encouraged to commit suicide, to urge the legislature to take up and pass legislation in the 85<sup>th</sup> Session of the Texas Legislature to strengthen bullying laws to include cyberbullying.

Texas PTA has long worked to provide bullying prevention education to parents and students and has partnered with Senator Menendez and other legislators to strengthen bullying laws since 2011.

“While the 2011 legislation was a step in the right direction, five years later the use of cell phones, iPads, and laptops and easy access to the Internet is commonplace and often necessary on middle school and high school campuses. The time has come to clarify the responsibilities of school officials and others in dealing with cyberbullying and to strengthen the law so that working together parents, teachers, school officials and others can effectively deal with serious episodes of cyberbullying,” shared Kyle Ward, Executive Director of Texas PTA.

“Yesterday and today students returned to school. The Molak’s son did not. Because of cyberbullying, he will never have the opportunity to walk across the stage to receive his high school diploma, attend college or follow his life dreams. This is tragic, unacceptable, senseless – and preventable. In Texas PTA our tagline is “Back the Future”. For the Vasquez family, it’s hard to think about the future when your child has been severely victimized by cyberbullying for having a disease and then told he should kill himself. It is sickening and disgusting that anyone would ever utter such words to a student. Texas PTA will work diligently with Senator Menendez and others to strengthen the bullying law in 2017,” added Ward.

*Texas PTA is the largest child advocacy organization in Texas with half a million members - parents, teachers and others who have a special interest in children, youth, families and schools. Texas PTA is a noncommercial, nonsectarian-nonpartisan organization that does not endorse any candidate or political party. For more information on Texas PTA, visit [www.txpta.org](http://www.txpta.org) or contact the state office at 800-TALK-PTA.*

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