

The Connecticut General Assembly



For IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 4, 2016

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Rep. McCarthy Vahey Applauds Passage of Bill Protecting Student Privacy

Bill inspired by Fairfield parent concerns goes to Governor's desk

Rep. Cristin McCarthy Vahey (D-Fairfield) praised passage of legislation that would protect student privacy by imposing certain restrictions on the use and sharing of student data. HB 5469, AN ACT CONCERNING STUDENT DATA PRIVACY, was passed by the Senate Wednesday evening. The bill now goes to the Governor's desk.

The legislation would restrict how student information may be used by contractors, consultants, and operators of websites, online services, and mobile applications for schools. Companies would be required to specify how they will secure student data and would be prohibited from using student data for advertising unless authorized by the contract.

“Schools in Connecticut and across the country are increasingly using websites, mobile apps, and other services to facilitate classroom learning and better communicate with students and parents. This bill will give families the peace of mind that utilizing these services does not compromise student privacy,” **Rep. McCarthy Vahey** said. “I’d like to thank Fairfielder Jennifer Jacobsen for being an incredible advocate for this legislation. She has been the driving force in our state bringing this issue to light. Parents shouldn’t have to worry about where their child’s personal information is going.”

Jacobsen is a former educator and the founder of the Fairfield-based grassroots advocacy group Connecticut Alliance for Privacy in Education (CAPE). Her interest in student privacy began when she noticed that an online school textbook was being used to solicit donations from her daughter.

“What began as a passion became a venture into my own education in how student information, used as a tool to help our educators, can also pose risks,” Jacobsen said.

“Along with many other concerned parents, I began to advocate for a state law that would serve to protect the children of our state. We are grateful for the help from key legislators, like Rep. Cristin McCarthy Vahey and Rep. Gail Lavielle of Norwalk, who helped the legislature to understand the importance of this legislation. The result is a very good bill and an important first step for Connecticut's students and families that keeps the door open for future dialogue.”

According to the National Association of State Boards of Education, state legislatures passed 16 student data privacy laws in 2015.

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