



June 5, 2013

Dear Senate Education Committee,

I am writing in regards to proposed legislation that will create a school violence hotline called OK-2-Say. Although I applaud the efforts of our state leaders to improve school and community safety, this new program will be a duplication of existing school violence programs and initiatives that have been developed and implemented by Crime Stoppers and Silent Observer programs around the State. Silent Observer and Crime Stoppers are national experts in the handling of anonymous tips about crimes in our schools and communities.

In 1998, the Kent County Silent Observer launched the Fast 50 Program which gives middle and high school students the ability to call, text or email through our web-based crime reporting system, with information about drugs, weapons, vandalism, threats, theft, bullying and other violations of their school conduct code. If that information leads to the discipline of a student or recovery of contraband, that student caller receives \$50. If a weapon is recovered the tip provider receives \$100. Fast 50 tips to Silent Observer in Kent County have stopped three acts of school violence, alerted authorities to two students contemplating suicide, alerted school officials to students engaged in sexting and other harmful activities, and has resulted in the removal of hundreds of weapons from our schools, and thousands of dollars in drugs either being sold or possessed by students.

Our Silent Observer Program has privately raised tens of thousands of dollars for Fast 50 to pay for rewards, marketing materials to give away at school functions we attend, poster contests for students and the printing of those to be placed in the schools, rewards, and communication tools like our text and web program.

Kent County Silent Observer isn't the only program that offers the Fast 50 or Campus Crime Stoppers program. Similar programs are operated in Wayne, Oakland, Washtenaw, Livingston, St. Clair, Monroe, Macomb, Kalamazoo, Ottawa, and Calhoun Counties all of which are successful and well-known by students and community members alike.

We value your commitment to school safety and violence prevention, but it does not make sense to duplicate well-recognized and successful programs that currently serve our communities well. I know that the Silent Observer and Crime Stoppers Programs throughout the Michigan would love to establish a partnership with you to enhance these efforts and to expand our services statewide. If you have any questions, please contact me at 616.771.0307.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris Cameron".

Chris Cameron  
Executive Director  
Kent County Silent Observer

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