



City of Cambridge

38.

IN CITY COUNCIL

November 25, 1996

- COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU
- VICE MAYOR BORN
- COUNCILLOR DAVIS
- COUNCILLOR DUEHAY
- COUNCILLOR GALLUCCIO
- COUNCILLOR REEVES
- COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN
- COUNCILLOR TOOMEY

WHEREAS: Incidents of anti-gay harassment continue to occur in the Cambridge public schools with alarming frequency; and

WHEREAS: Such harassment--whether it be in the nature of physical assaults or verbal abuse - in and of itself is reprehensible and must not be tolerated; and

WHEREAS: Massachusetts has enacted legislation prohibiting such discriminatory behavior in the public schools; and

WHEREAS: Lawsuits in other states alleging failure to protect an individual from such harassment and related abuse has resulted in million dollar settlements (see attached article); now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the City Manager be and is hereby directed to confer with the School Department and the Superintendent of Schools in order to ascertain whether sufficient policy directives and training are in place to prevent anti-gay harassment from escalating to violence and whether all administrators, principals and teachers are following said directives; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the City Clerk send a copy of this resolution to the School Committee and that the City Manager report back to the City Council at its next December meeting.

In City Council November 25, 1996
Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.
Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy; *D. Margaret Drury*

ATTEST:-
D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

District to pay nearly \$1m in abuse of gay student

NEW CLAIRBORNE, Wis. — A Wisconsin school district agreed yesterday to pay nearly \$1 million to a former high school student for failing to protect him from harassment and abuse because he was gay.

The out-of-court settlement came hours after a federal court jury found officials of the Ashland-Wilm School District liable for their inaction in the case of Jamie Nabozny,

now 21.

The settlement was worked out by lawyers for both sides before the jury began deliberations on damages.

Peg Byron, communication director for the New York-based Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, which represented Nabozny, said the settlement called for \$900,000 in damages and up to \$62,000 in medical expenses.

"This is the first time a federal jury has

had a chance to judge a school for its response to anti-gay violence. The entire country should learn a lesson from the results," said Patricia Logue of Lambda.

"Countless gay kids have paid a high price for abuse. Now the tables have turned and it is prejudice that is costly," she said.

Nabozny claimed his constitutional right to equal protection under the law was violated because the school district failed to heed his complaints. He was verbally abused and

said at one point two boys urinated on him.

He tried to commit suicide and was diagnosed as suffering from depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

During his junior year in 1998 he dropped out and later earned a high school equivalency degree.

"I feel like I have justice, and that this means justice for all other kids out there who aren't sure if they should stay in school or stay alive," Nabozny said in a statement.

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SEAN CLARKE WELLS - A Wisconsin school district agreed yesterday to pay nearly \$1 million to a former high school student for failing to protect him from harassment and abuse because he was gay.

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Councilor Triantafillou

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COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU

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Boen, Davis, Puchay, Galluccio, Reeves
Consent Order #38 Sullivan, Toomey

Councillor Triantafillou re: Incidents
of anti-gay harassment continue to occur
in the Cambridge public schools with
alarming frequency.

CM-573

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In City Council November 25, 1996

ORDER ADOPTED