

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 28, 2008

Contact: Workplace Bullying Institute (360) 656-6630  
namie@workplacebullying.org



## Rampant Workplace Bullying Ignored by Employers

In a new Labor Day 2008 study conducted by the Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI), bullied workers report that employers predominantly do nothing to stop the mistreatment when reported (53%). Employers actually retaliated against the person (in 71% of cases) who dared to report it.

Four hundred (400) respondents completed an online Employer Response survey at the WBI website, a self-selected sample. In 2007, WBI wrote, and Zogby International conducted, the first scientific U.S. survey of workplace bullying. With 7,740 respondents, the WBI-Zogby poll found that 37% of the workforce directly experienced mistreatment characterized as either verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, humiliation or sabotage of work. An additional 12% of adult Americans witnessed bullying at work. It was shown to be undeniably common.

According to the 2008 WBI survey using the same definition, in 40% of cases, targets considered the employer's "investigation" to be inadequate or unfair with less than 2% of investigations described as fair and safe for the bullied person. Filing complaints led to retaliation by employers of bullied targets leading to lost jobs (24%). Alleged bullies were punished in only 6.2% of cases. Bullying is done with impunity.

The online Co-Worker Response survey of 400 different respondents found that coworkers were nearly as unhelpful as employers. In 46% of bullying cases, coworkers abandoned their bullied colleagues, to the extent that 15% aggressed against the target along with the bully. Coworkers did nothing in 16% of cases. They took positive steps 36% of the time -- limited to offering moral support. The rarest outcome (less than 1%) was for coworkers to band together to stop the bullying through confrontation. Coworkers' personal fears were the preferred explanation (55%) by bullied targets for the actions taken or not taken by witnesses.

"Despite recent major business headlines (*Wall Street Journal*: Lawyers & employers take fight to bullies ; *Business Week*: Employers can't ignore workplace bullying), and the costs associated with bullying, it is obviously going to take the passage of anti-bullying laws to get employers to take bullying seriously," speculates Gary Namie, WBI Director.

The WBI-Legislative Campaign is responsible for the introduction of the anti-bullying Healthy Workplace Bill in 13 states since 2003. Coordinators are active in 21 states and one Canadian province.

Results found at: <http://bullyinginstitute.org/wbi2008.html>

###

**Contact:** Gary Namie, Ph.D., WBI, (360) 656-6630

**About WBI:** The Bellingham, WA-based Workplace Bullying Institute is the sole nonprofit research & education organization in the U.S. dedicated to the correction and prevention of workplace bullying.

[namie@workplacebullying.org](mailto:namie@workplacebullying.org)