

# TRIBUNE-REVIEW

## Westmoreland supports law on dating violence

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Westmoreland County Commissioners voted yesterday to support a proposed state law that would require schools to provide education about dating violence to their students.

The proposed law is named after Demi Brae Cuccia, the Gateway High School teen who was killed Aug. 15, 2007, by her ex-boyfriend. Earlier this year, the bill passed the state House of Representatives. It now rests in the education committee of the state Senate.

The commissioners' resolution urges the passage of the bill by the Senate.

Cuccia's father, Gary Cuccia, said the proposed new law would save lives. The bill would mandate schools to provide education on dating violence for students in 7th through 12th grades.

"We were totally unaware this was possible. Had my daughter had some kind of education she would be alive today," Cuccia said. "We need to take the initiative and put education into the classroom where the children are. Undoubtedly that will save lives."

Demi Brae Cuccia was stabbed to death the day after her 16th birthday by her ex-boyfriend, John Mullarkey. Mullarkey, now 21, was convicted of first-degree murder and is serving life in prison.

Since her death, her parents have lobbied for the passage of the law in her name.

In addition to Westmoreland County, other municipalities including the city of Pittsburgh, Cuccia's hometown of Monroeville and New Alexandria, where Gary Cuccia works as a chiropractor, have approved similar resolutions calling for passage of the proposed state law.

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