

13-0085

JAN 18 2013

PUBLIC SAFETY

MOTION

The rise of instant communications and social media has added a new dimension to the age old childhood problem of bullying. Anonymous bullying via social media channels allows for students to be subject to abuse by their peers 24 hours a day and allow the libelous information to be distributed to a wide audience. The bullying is not limited to harmful words or accusations, but can include the distribution of photographs taken without the consent of the student. The short and long term effects of bullying, made worse by the expansion of the audience, can range from social withdrawal, declining performance at school, and in some cases end in suicide.

As noted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, California leads the nation in reported instances of bullying. 52% of all students included in the survey reported experiencing some form of cyberbullying, 11% report had embarrassing or damaging pictures taken of themselves without their permission, often using cell phone cameras, and roughly half of the students surveyed report they had not shared the knowledge of their online bullying with their parents.

Recently, the communities of San Pedro and Wilmington experienced a widespread case of cyberbullying when a number of Facebook pages appeared containing erotic and scantily clad images of local high school students. The so-called "ratchets" pages encouraged participants to post photos of students for commentary by their peers based upon their perceived level of sexual activity. As is typical of cyberbullying cases, many of the photos were taken without the consent of the student and were distributed and commented on by a large audience. After receiving numerous complaints from outraged community members, LAPD and Facebook worked in cooperation to remove the offensive pages. However, the concern remains that this situation has the potential for repeat future instances. As noted by the LAPD, since the images in question did not fit the definition of child pornography, and there are no clear statues to crack down on instances and perpetrators of cyberbullying.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the LAPD be INSTRUCTED to report within 45 days to the Public Safety Committee on what policies and procedures it currently has in place to investigate instances of cyberbullying, and report on what additional resources or ordinances would be necessary to allow them to more effectively address this problem.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Attorney's office be REQUESTED to report within 45 days to the Public Safety Committee on existing statutes within the LAMC, State or Federal law that can be utilized by law enforcement to curtail cyberbullying, as well as recommend changes in law to protect minors from abuse, without infringing on 1st Amendment protections of free speech.

Presented By Joe Buscaino
JOE BUSCAINO
Councilmember, 15th District

Seconded By E.G.

[Signature]
JAN 18 2013

ORIGINAL