



## THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK OFFICE OF COUNCIL MEMBER MARK S. WEPRIN

### CONTACT:

Yuridia Peña · [yuridia.pena@council.nyc.gov](mailto:yuridia.pena@council.nyc.gov) · (212) 788-6984

For Immediate Release

June 6, 2013

---

### **COUNCIL MEMBER MARK WEPRIN ISSUES CALL TO ACTION IN RESPONSE TO SUICIDE ATTEMPT FOLLOWING BULLYING**

Council Member Mark Weprin (D-Oakland Gardens) is shocked and outraged by news that a twelve-year-old girl from Eastern Queens nearly lost her life at the hands of middle school bullies; she attempted suicide after apparently suffering for far too long. While the girl survived, thanks to the timely intervention of one of her friends, and is now receiving appropriate care, her friend Gabrielle Molina was not so lucky. Tragically, Gabrielle took her own life two weeks ago. Reports indicate that both girls were dealing with severe and persistent bullying, including cyberbullying. Gabrielle attended Intermediate School 109Q in Queens Village and the girl who more recently survived a suicide attempt is a student at Middle School 172Q in Floral Park; both schools are in the Eastern Queens district that Council Member Mark Weprin represents.

“It is time for a citywide call to action to stop bullying among teens and pre-teens,” said Council Member Mark Weprin. “As a parent with children in middle school and high school, I will not stand by as students’ lives are at risk.”

In light of these serious incidents, Council Member Weprin is calling for a citywide initiative to combat the scourge of bullying in public schools. In 2011, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg signed into law a bill by Council Member Mark Weprin and Council Member Lewis A. Fidler (D-Brooklyn) that altered the human rights law to facilitate instruction on bias-related harassment, especially cyberbullying. That law was passed in response to a disturbing number of incidents in which young people were victims of bullying via internet or electronic devices. Cyberbullying education aims to combat that trend, but clearly there is more work to be done.

“Too many children and teens have suffered for no good reason,” said Council Member Mark Weprin. “If we want our children to grow up in a nurturing and compassionate society, there is absolutely no place for cyberbullying or for bullying of any kind.”

In recent years, the widespread presence of internet access, mobile telephones, and other electronic devices has facilitated an environment in which schoolyard teasing can escalate into an even more serious and pervasive problem as cyberbullying infiltrates internet messaging, chat rooms, social networking websites, email, and text messaging. In a few cases, the harassment has become so severe that young people have chosen to end their lives. The two recent cases in Eastern Queens underscore the pressing need for a comprehensive approach to ending this pernicious behavior and ensuring the well-being of students.

“Nothing is more important than the safety of our children,” said Council Member Mark Weprin. “The New York City Department of Education must take every possible action against bullying. Students must know that this type of behavior is completely unacceptable, has consequences, and needs to be eradicated.”