

Dr. Martin Karp, Member

SUBJECT: REQUEST THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 05-38 ENCOURAGING THE EDUCATION OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN REGARDING THE DANGERS OF SEXUAL SOLICITATION AND ABUSE OF YOUTH AND SUPPORT THE ADOPTION OF THE RESOLUTION BY THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY & GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The statistics on sexual abuse nationwide are staggering with one of three girls and one of six boys being victims of sexual abuse before the age of 18. Sexual assaults comprise 67 percent of the crimes against juvenile victims. Seventy-seven percent of sexual assaults on juveniles occur in the residence. Child sexual abuse contributes to other social dilemmas with over 90 percent of all child molesters having been assaulted as children. Over 80 percent of prostitutes on the street were sexually abused as children and four out of five individuals incarcerated in penal institutions were abused as children. In general, children who are sexually abused are at a higher risk of being involved in other aggressive and destructive behaviors which negatively impact their lives and the wellness of the community.

Additionally, internet solicitation of children is on the rise. Although on-line computer exploration opens a world of possibilities for children, expanding their horizons and exposing them to different cultures and different ways of life, they can also be exposed to dangers while exploring the information highway. There are individuals who attempt to sexually exploit children through the Internet. As more children begin to utilize the internet in their daily lives the opportunity and incidence of internet crimes targeting children for sexual exploitation increases.

School districts have the ability to reach a broad cross-section of parents to educate them about sexual abuse and internet safety for children. Parents are often unsure of how to tell if their child is being targeted by such predators and how to report such suspensions. Providing such vital information to our community would be a great service and help to protect our students against those who would take advantage of them. At its June 15, 2005, The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approved Board item B-4 to review the sexual abuse education program for the purposes of updating and strengthening the curriculum; disseminate information at school sites for children, educators, and parents; and the creation of programs to address the need at The Parent Academy. This effort should be encouraged if not required statewide. The adoption of the Resolution by the Florida Legislature will bring about statewide attention to the matter.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY:
DR. MARTIN KARP**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 05-38 encouraging the education of parents and children regarding the dangers of sexual solicitation and abuse of youth and support the adoption of the resolution by the Florida Legislature.

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Resolution No. 05-38
FLORIDA SENATE/FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ENCOURAGES THE EDUCATION OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN REGARDING THE
DANGERS OF SEXUAL SOLICITATION AND ABUSE OF YOUTH

Whereas Nationwide, one of three girls and one of six boys experience some form of sexual abuse before age 18;

Whereas sexual assaults comprise 67 percent of the crimes against juvenile victims;

Whereas by the end of 1998, more than 40 percent of all American homes had computers and 25 percent had Internet access. Children and teenagers are one of the fastest growing groups of Internet users. An estimated 77 million kids are online in 2005;

Whereas as educating parents and children about the risks associated with the Internet is of paramount importance to the safety of children;

Whereas the Center for Missing and Exploited Children reports that only 1/3 of the households with Internet access are proactively protecting their children with filtering or blocking software;

Whereas 75 percent of children are willing to share personal information online about themselves and their family in exchange for goods and services;

Whereas the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's website reports that only about 25 percent of the youth who encountered a sexual approach or solicitation on the Internet told a parent;

Whereas the Crimes Against Children Research Center reports that one in five U.S. teenagers who regularly log on to Internet say they have received an unwanted sexual solicitation via the Web;

Whereas research indicates that 69 percent of parents and 76 percent of youth do not know where or how to report incidents of sexual solicitation on the Internet;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT:

The Florida Senate/Florida House of Representatives approves Resolution encouraging the education of parents and children about sexual abuse, the risks associated with online communication, how to protect their children while they are online and how and where to report cases of sexual solicitation and exploitation that occurs over the Internet.

A copy of this resolution is placed in the permanent records of this Board.

Presented this seventh day of September, A.D. 2005

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

CHAIR

ATTEST:

SECRETARY