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Assembly California Legislature

COMMITTEES
HEALTH
UTILITIES AND COMMERCE



SUSAN A. BONILLA
CHAIR, BUSINESS, PROFESSIONS, AND CONSUMER PROTECTION
ASSEMBLYWOMAN, FOURTEENTH DISTRICT

January 14, 2014

Mr. Mark Peterson
District Attorney
Contra Costa County
900 Ward St
Martinez, CA 94553

Dear Mr. Peterson:

The case of Jewlyes Gutierrez has been brought to my attention by many of our shared constituencies. It is my understanding that Ms. Gutierrez is a 16 year old teenager, who identifies as a transgender female. Furthermore, her gender identity has caused her to be a victim of taunting, harassment, and bullying by her peers. According to news reports and information brought to me by constituents, on November 13, 2013, Ms. Gutierrez defended herself against three girls who were tormenting and then physically attacked her. It is my understanding that the school suspended all participants in the altercation because of the violent actions that occurred.

Violence towards transgender and queer youth is a serious problem. The incident that took place presents a bigger problem for our community that will not be solved by pressing charges against Ms. Gutierrez. I believe we all need to work together to provide educational programs and resources to create safe spaces, teach tolerance, and implement effective bullying prevention practices. I believe that prosecuting Ms. Gutierrez would demonstrate to her peers and our community that intolerance, bullying, and discriminating others because they are different is acceptable. As elected officials of our community, I believe it is our role to provide for our youth a safe, welcoming environment in which they can learn to become productive members of our community. .

At this time, I respectfully request that your office dismiss all charges against Ms. Gutierrez and offer any assistance to school districts to prevent future incidents from occurring.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Bonilla".

Susan A. Bonilla
Assemblywoman, 14th District

