



Date: March 4, 2008

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Tonia Reyes Uranga, Seventh District *(TRU)*

Subject: **AGENDA ITEM: Youth Transgender Policy / Hate Crime Reporting**

On February 12, 2008, 15 year-old Lawrence King was shot and killed by a fellow 14 year-old High School student in Oxnard, California. Lawrence was a recently-out teen who identified as transgender. While there were numerous warning signs, the tragic outcome has been described as unpreventable because of lack of protocols regarding hate crime and transgender identification being in place to provide guidelines not only for the students, but also for staff that were aware of growing conflicts but did not know how or where to report concerns.

California has laws protecting students from harassment and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression in schools. The California Student Safety and Violence Prevention Act was enacted in 2000, and further strengthened through the passage of AB 394 (The Safe Place to Learn Act) and SB 777 (The CA Student Civil Rights Act), which went into effect on January 1, 2008.

Never the less, every day young people are subject to bullying or harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity and expression. With young people coming out at younger ages, our schools – especially our junior highs and middle schools – and all of us who interact with our youth need to be proactive about teaching respect for diversity based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The tragic death of Lawrence King is a wake-up call for all of us to better protect our youth from harassment. I believe it is necessary that we are proactive in protecting all of our youth and residents from such “symptoms of hate”, and that means being proactive in how we as a City would respond in similar circumstances, as well as outreaching to our community on what constitutes a hate crime and how to report it.

Recommendation: Request the City Manager to direct appropriate staff, if possible in tandem with Long Beach Unified School District, to review, and if necessary create protocols for staff and youth on how to promote respect for diversity, including transgender, as well as review, and if necessary create program for students and staff on reporting suspected hate crimes.