



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Peter Oberacker

Oberacker, Senate Republicans Urge Appointments to Cyberbullying Task Force

JEFF BISHOP, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR August 15, 2022

| ISSUE: **CYBERBULLYING, CYBERBULLYING TASK FORCE**



ALBANY, NY – New York State Senators Peter Oberacker, Ranking Member of the Internet and Technology Committee; Anthony Palumbo, Ranking Member of the Senate Codes Committee; and George Borrello, Member of the Internet and Technology Committee, penned a letter to Governor Kathy Hochul, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie urging them to rectify their missed deadline to make appointments to a task force to study cyber bullying. The members of the

task force were to be appointed no later than January 20, 2022, yet no official appointments have been made.

The Task Force was created to provide a study identifying the most common victims, most frequently used mediums, and the social and psychological effects of cyber-bullying in addition to measures to combat cyber-bullying, including actions taken by other states.

“To give the task force members the time needed to begin their critical work, conduct a thorough investigation and generate effective recommendations to combat cyber-bullying, it is imperative that you make your respective appointments as soon as possible,” the letter reads.

The study is expected to result in recommendations produced by July 1, 2023. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly a third of middle and high schools report incidents of cyberbullying.

“I am greatly dismayed that at a time when young people need our help the most, the Governor and Legislative Leaders have failed to make appointments to the Cyberbullying Task Force. The lasting mental health impacts from the pandemic, combined with the pervasiveness of technology has made the charge of the Cyberbullying Task Force extremely pressing and important. I implore our State leaders to act and make these important appointments immediately,” said Senator Anthony Palumbo, Ranking Member of the Codes Committee.

“Failure to follow through on deadlines that matter – that is the hallmark of one-party-rule in Albany. As social media and online use has skyrocketed so has cyberbullying with very dangerous consequences for our young people. The task force has an important job ahead that will literally save lives, it needs to be filled immediately,” said Senator Peter Oberacker, Ranking Member of the Internet and Technology Committee.

“Creating a task force through legislation is only the first step of the process. It’s sad to see another example of the all-too-often delays in creating these committees and task forces. Cyberbullying is traumatizing and life-damaging. Sadly, sometimes the suffering is so great, it drives victims to self-harm and suicide,” said Senator George Borrello.

“At a time when young people continue to deal with the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, we must do all we can to protect our children. This begins with learning and studying this issue and for these reasons, we request you appoint your members to this task force so they may begin their critical work,” concluded the Senators.

A copy of the letter is attached.

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