



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
CITY COUNCIL

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COUNCILMAN AT-LARGE

March 13, 2012

Motion Picture Association of America
Attn: Mr. Howard Gettler
15301 Ventura Blvd., Building E
Sherman Oaks, CA 91403

Dear Mr. Gettler,

While I appreciate the great responsibility the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) has in ensuring that films are appropriately rated so that the viewing public can make educated decisions about which films to see, I am deeply troubled by the MPAA's decision to provide the film "Bully" with an "R" rating – which I am told is based on the use of the infamous "F" word five times in the film.

As a Philadelphia City Councilman who has screened an advance copy of the film, I firmly believe this film must be seen by as many students as possible. The film has a vitally important and powerful message that can open the eyes of all students to the pain and real consequences of bullying other students.

Your "R" rating will make it more difficult for hundreds of thousands of young people to see this film because it will prohibit their access unless they are accompanied by a parent or guardian.

I am sure you know that school violence and bullying is reaching epidemic proportions in many of our schools. It is estimated that over 13 million kids will be bullied this year, and at least 3 million will stay home because they feel unsafe in school.

Philadelphia has our own problem trying to confront the issue of violence and bullying in our schools. The Philadelphia Inquirer recently published a groundbreaking series on school violence entitled "Assault on Learning" that documented more than 30,000 serious incidents in the 146,000 student Philadelphia School District over the last five years.

Here is the link to that series of articles:

http://www.philly.com/philly/news/special_packages/inquirer/school-violence/

Rightly or wrongly, the use of the "F" word is common among many of our young people. It is a reality to hear the "F" word uttered by teenagers – and it's a sad reality that

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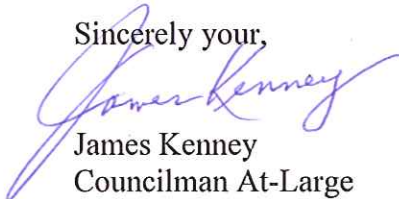
bullying and violence is epidemic in many of our schools. We cannot, nor should be – ignore these common realities. That’s why I would ask you to reconsider your “R” rating for the film “Bully” and change the designation to a “PG-13” so that thousands of young people can see this vitally important film.

I am working with the local Safe Schools Advocate for the School District of Philadelphia – Ms. Kelly Hodge - and the local chapter of the Anti-Defamation League to do all we can to have an estimated 10,000 local Philadelphia students view this film. We are raising money to purchase tickets and provide bus transportation to students who would not otherwise be able to see it.

In our fight to stop bullying and violence in our schools, we need your support and understanding to realize the extent and reality of bullying and violence in our schools. Please help us change the environment in our schools so that no child should ever fear going to school. Our schools should be safe havens for learning and educational nourishment. Please help us to protect our children and change the “R” rating for “Bully” to a “PG-13.”

Thank you for all of your time and consideration.

Sincerely your,



James Kenney
Councilman At-Large