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## NEWS RELEASE

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### Idaho Alliance Working to Stop Online Bullying

BOISE, ID –Bullies are everywhere, even online, and bullying in any form should be taken seriously. The statewide initiative led by the Idaho Alliance on Bullying Prevention seeks to stop or at least curtail the use of online tools and devices to intimidate or harass another person. In conjunction with October’s designation as national Cyberbullying Prevention/Cyber Safety Month, the Alliance is asking Idahoans to be aware of and help eliminate the harmful effects of online bullying.

“Idaho is not immune to cyberbullying,” said Idaho Governor C.L. “Butch” Otter in a public service announcement ([PSA](#)) sponsored by the Alliance and produced by Idaho Public Television (IdahoPTV). “Over 18,000 Idaho kids receive texts or messages from bullies every year. We can help stop this practice with education about the harmful effects of bullying and how to create a zero tolerance for harassment in and out of school.” In another [PSA](#), Idaho Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna said, “Technology allows for exciting opportunities to explore the world around us, but too often this same technology is used to harass and bully.” The prevention of this form of harassment begins with Idahoans practicing “digital citizenship.”

Cyberbullying can occur in many forms—not only through texting but also instant messaging, social networks, email, websites, blogs, and other methods of digital communication. According to the Pew Internet Teens and Technology 2013 [study](#), 95 percent of United States teens are online and 78 percent have cell phones that provide avenues of access to those who would bully.

A 2012 [survey](#) of 8- to 17-year-olds conducted for Microsoft provided the following information on cyberbullying:

- 57 percent say they know about online bullying
- 54 percent are worried about online bullying
- 37 percent report being bullied online and 72 percent offline
- 24 percent admit to bullying someone online
- 42 percent admit to bullying someone offline

To help address these trends, the Idaho Alliance on Bullying Prevention was established last year to offer resources that provide awareness and education about the risks and prevention of cyberbullying.



“Students, parents, and educators are encouraged to learn more about bullying — to recognize it, prevent it, and take action to stop it,” says Ann Joslin, Idaho’s state librarian and head of the Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL), a member of the Alliance.

In addition to the ICfL and IdahoPTV, the Alliance includes the Idaho Education Network, the Office of Attorney General Lawrence Wasden, the Idaho State Department of Education, the Idaho School Boards Association, the Idaho Association of School Administrators, and the Idaho Library Association.

The ICfL’s “cyberbullying information and prevention” website—with video, articles, and specific tips for students, parents, and educators and librarians—is at <http://guides.lili.org/cyberbullying> and includes Governor Otter’s and Superintendent Luna’s public service announcements. IdahoPTV’s cyberbullying prevention website is at <http://idahoptv.org/learn/cyberbully/>. The Attorney General’s Office has a *ProtectTeens* DVD, which includes a chapter addressing cyberbullying and other online threats to children and is orderable through the Attorney General’s website at [www.ag.idaho.gov](http://www.ag.idaho.gov). Check out these resources and find out how you can help prevent online bullying.

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The Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) assists libraries to build the capacity to better serve their clientele. To learn more about ICfL, visit <http://libraries.idaho.gov/>.