Incident at Vincent High School demonstrates the need for policy changes at schools

**Statement of Alderwoman Larresa Taylor**

**April 16, 2025**

In light of recent events at Vincent High School (where a fight broke out at a basketball game and a young lady was captured on video being thrown around and stomped) we must remember that it is paramount for schools to maintain the safety and security of all students, as well as staff and teachers.

After speaking with school officials, I understand that this incident may have been one of several to take place that day. It should go without saying that fighting is not acceptable inside or outside of any school building. In an effort to ensure the safety and security of our students, staff, and teachers, it is important that we look at the policies that are in place to keep everyone safe.

One such policy would be to explore the collection of cell phones. It is my experience in 17 years of teaching that cell phones have been used to summon the support of outsiders to settle disputes among students, and to capture these incidents to share publically. When this happens, it is usually unbeknown to school staff and teachers, which then creates an unsafe situation. It is then that things can spiral out of control. Whether used to summon help to settle disputes, or as a recording device to later post the events to social media, it seems greater regulation of cell phone use in schools could go a long way to increasing safety.

It is great to know that school staff and school resource officers (SROs) worked together to get this situation under control, but the presence of SROs alone is not enough. More needs to be done to prevent these types of incidents from occurring in the first place, and it MUST include comprehensive policies and procedures that are strictly adhered to by all.

At the end of the day, students, staff, and faculty deserve nothing less than to feel safe in schools.

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