

Ottawa Journal: new law protecting Canadians from online crime

Cyberbullying is a sad reality faced by too many young Canadians across the country. It can destroy the lives of its victims and their families. This is why our Government is pleased that our Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act has now become law.

The legislation is helping to ensure Canadians are better protected from online criminal activity, including young Canadians from the dangers of cyberbullying. The new law is giving police the tools they need to investigate crime in today's high-tech environment, while at the same time, protecting Canadians' privacy.

It is now an offence to share an intimate image without the consent of the person in the image. This includes when the photo is taken without the person in the photo even realising it or if it is taken unwillingly. The new law also empowers the court to remove an intimate image from the Internet and order forfeiture of the device used to commit the offence.

Meanwhile, the new legislation will also take a strong stand for victims. Indeed, for too long the justice system has been about protecting the rights of criminals, not the victims of the crimes. Now, the courts will be empowered to provide for reimbursement to victims for costs incurred in removing intimate images from the Internet and elsewhere.

Our Government has a strong record of protecting Canadians, especially children, from online criminal activity. We increased the age of protection from 14 to 16 years and strengthened measures to protect children from online sexual exploitation. We've also taken a strong stand for victims to provide for a stronger voice in Canada's criminal justice system by delivering our Victim's Bill of Rights.

If you or someone you know is being cyberbullied, talk about it with an adult you trust. Contact the police if the bullying is serious and remember you can always call the Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868; it's anonymous and confidential.

Through the Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act, our Government is proud to continue working to help keep Canadians, young and old, safe while online.

By David Tilson, M.P.