

Prosecutors seek 3-year prison term in cyber-bullying case

May 7 2009, By Robert Patrick

Federal prosecutors are asking a federal judge to send Lori Drew to prison for three years for her role in the online harassment of a teenage girl in Dardenne Prairie, Mo., who killed herself.

The recommendation made in court documents Wednesday came three days after a defense filing revealed that a pre-sentence report suggests probation and a \$5,000 fine.

Sentencing is set for May 18.

Prosecutors say Drew hatched a scheme to create a fake MySpace online profile of a teenage boy to harass her daughter's sometime rival, neighbor Megan Meier, 13, knowing the girl was depressed, suicidal and vulnerable. After Megan hanged herself at home, they said, Drew tried to cover up her role.

Drew's lawyer, H. Dean Steward, has said his client was aware of the profile but did not create it, participate or know about Megan's depression. The attorney also said that Drew did not send a chilling final message to Megan that said the world would be better off without her.

Federal prosecutors brought charges in Los Angeles, where [MySpace](#) is based, Jurors were unable to reach a decision on a felony charge of conspiracy, but did convict Drew Nov. 26 of three misdemeanor charges of illegally accessing a protected computer and violating the terms of service.

In a sentencing memo Sunday, Steward noted that Drew had to abandon her business after repeated harassment that also caused her family to move from O'Fallon, Mo. He endorsed the probation but said his client could not afford the fine.

Prosecutors said the "callousness" of her conduct "and the extraordinary harm" merited the maximum of three years in prison. They said that the sentencing guidelines calling for probation "substantially understate the seriousness of the offense."

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