



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0240-2022, **Version:** *

Res. No. 240

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.2584A/A.6616, which would require comprehensive sexuality instruction for students in grades K-12 which addresses age and developmentally appropriate physical, mental, emotional and social dimensions of human sexuality and reflects the national sexuality education standards.

By Council Members Hanif, Cabán, Abreu, Williams, Schulman, Krishnan, Ossé, Gutiérrez, Richardson Jordan, Avilés, Hudson, Restler, Marte and Sanchez (at the request of the Bronx Borough President)

Whereas, According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), in 2019, 25.5 percent of New York City (NYC) high school students reported previously engaging in sexual intercourse, and 45.3 percent of students who reported being sexually active reported not using a condom during their last sexual intercourse; and

Whereas, Failure to use condoms during sexual intercourse puts sexually active students' health at risk; and

Whereas, According to the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), in 2019, there were over 16,100 chlamydia diagnoses and nearly 3,400 gonorrhea diagnoses of individuals aged 10-19 in New York City; and

Whereas, Data also shows that many NYC students' physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing are at risk due to dating violence, and according to the 2019 YRBS, 8.2 percent of all high school students experienced sexual dating violence, including 6.3 percent of high school students in New York City; and

Whereas, The National Sexuality Education Standards reports that comprehensive and age-appropriate sex education, beginning in primary school, can have many benefits for students, including lowering rates of unplanned pregnancies, maternal deaths, unsafe abortions, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs); and

Whereas, Despite the benefits of sexual health education, New York State (NYS) does not require students to take sexual health education and only requires students to receive HIV/AIDS education each year beginning in Kindergarten; and

Whereas, NYS does, however, mandate that kindergarten through fifth grade students receive sequential health education each year, and requires 54 hours of health education for middle and high school students to be taught by a certified instructor; and

Whereas, While health education is beneficial for students, advocates claim that given the mental, physical, and sexual health risks many NYS students are taking, the State should also require all students to take sexuality health education; and

Whereas, Unlike the State, NYC's Department of Education (DOE) requires sixth to twelfth grade students to take sexual health education, but data shows that many DOE students are not fulfilling this requirement; and

Whereas, During a January 2019 NYC Council Education Committee oversight hearing, DOE testified that only 37.2 percent of eighth graders received the complete 54-hour sex education course during the 2017-18 school year, and according to a 2016 poll conducted by the Sexual Education Alliance of New York City, only 65 percent of middle and high school students reported that their school health classes included sexuality education; and

Whereas, Pursuant to Local Law 90 of 2017, which created a Sexual Health Education Task Force (Task Force), in 2018, the Task Force released a report detailing the state of sexual health education in NYC schools and included eleven recommendations on how the DOE can improve on its offering and of implementation of sex health education; and

Whereas, The Task Force found an "urgent need for policy and practice reform" regarding sexual health education in NYC, and recommended that DOE increase the mandated amount of sexual health education across all grade levels and create district-level and school-level accountability for sexual health education; and

Whereas, While the DOE has made recent efforts to address the lack of sexual health education in its school, including the adoption of Health Ed Works, which is a four-year health education initiative, it still does not require sexual health education to be taught in all grades and advocates are concerned that many middle and high school students are still missing out on valuable sex education instruction; and

Whereas, A state law that mandates comprehensive sexuality instruction for students in grades K-12 would help ensure that students across the City and State have the knowledge to help them make the best decisions in relationships and during sexual activity; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.2584A/A.6616, which would require comprehensive sexuality instruction for students in grades K-12 which addresses age and developmentally appropriate physical, mental, emotional and social dimensions of human sexuality and reflects the national sexuality education standards.

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