



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 56

Resolution calling upon the appropriate committee of the Council of the City of New York to conduct hearings on the findings of the October 15, 2004 Report of the National Institutes of Health, concluding that counseling programs for families and youth-at-risk are more effective in deterring adolescent violence than “get tough” programs, group detention facilities, treating juveniles as adults in the criminal justice system and adult lecturing programs.

By Council Members Foster, James, Mendez, Sanders Jr. and Liu

Whereas, The National Institutes of Health, a branch of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, released a report on October 15, 2004 detailing the results of a study of the causes of youth violence and effective ways to prevent it; and

Whereas, That study determined that the most effective intervention methods include intensive counseling programs for families and youth-at-risk; and

Whereas, The report further determined that “get tough” programs, group detention centers, treating juveniles as adults in the criminal justice system and adult lecturing programs such as Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) do not significantly deter criminal behavior; and

Whereas, These programs bring together youths already inclined to violent behavior who may share their criminally oriented aptitudes with one another; as the report notes, “the more sophisticated instruct the more naïve in precisely the behaviors that the intervener wished to prevent;” and

Whereas, The report finds that youth violence can be traced to a variety of conditions, including inconsistent or callous parenting, poor peer relations, gang involvement, lack of connection with school and violence in their neighborhoods; and

Whereas, The report cites two counseling programs: one a therapeutic plan in which youths and their

families attend twelve, one-hour sessions over a period of three months, and a community based clinical treatment program focusing on violent and chronic juvenile offenders at risk of being removed from their families who attended approximately sixty hours of counseling over roughly four months with therapists available at all hours; and

Whereas, Juveniles attending counseling programs showed reduced arrest rates and decreased out-of-home placements, and continued to demonstrate positive effects four years after treatment; and

Whereas, A significant factor in the effectiveness of these counseling programs was that counselors observed families and youths together, offering suggestions for better parenting; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the appropriate committee of the Council of the City of New York conduct hearings on the findings of the October 15, 2004 Report of the National Institutes of Health, concluding that counseling programs for families and youth-at-risk are more effective in deterring adolescent violence than “get tough” programs, group detention facilities, treating juveniles as adults in the criminal justice system and adult lecturing programs.

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