



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0454-2014, **Version:** *

Res. No. 454

Resolution calling upon the United States Congress to pass and the President to sign H.R. 5277/S.2695, also known as the Survivor Outreach and Support Campus Act, which would amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to require institutions of higher education to have an independent advocate for campus sexual assault prevention and response.

By Council Members Williams, Cumbo, Gibson, Barron, Eugene, Koo, Mendez and Rosenthal

Whereas, According to a 2007 campus sexual assault study by the United States Department of Justice, 1 in 5 women and 1 in 16 men are targets of attempted or completed sexual assault while they are college students,; and

Whereas, According to a 2003 study by the National College Women Sexual Victimization (“NCWSV”), less than 5% of completed and/or attempted rapes were reported to law enforcement officials,; and

Whereas, According to the NCWSV study, victims identified barriers to reporting sexual assault including fear of hostile treatment by authorities and not knowing how to report the incident; and

Whereas, Many U.S. colleges and universities have recently come under scrutiny for their handling of reports of sexual assault; and

Whereas, In July 2014, Congresswoman Susan Davis and U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer introduced H.R. 5277 and S.2695, respectively; and

Whereas, H.R.5277/S.2695 is known as the “Survivor Outreach and Support Campus Act” or “SOS Act”; and

Whereas, The SOS Act would amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 by requiring each institution of higher education that receives federal funding under Title IV to designate an independent advocate for campus

sexual assault prevention and response; and

Whereas, The independent advocate would represent the interests of the sexual assault victim even when in conflict with the interests of the institution; and

Whereas, The advocate would maintain the privacy and confidentiality of any victim and would not notify the institution of the identity of the victim unless otherwise required by law; and

Whereas, The responsibilities of the advocate would include providing information on how to report a campus sexual assault to law enforcement, information on legal services, and information on the victim's rights and referrals to additional support services; and

Whereas, The SOS Act is supported by notable groups and organizations, including the University of California, the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, and the National Women's Law Center, among others; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Congress to pass and the President to sign H.R. 5277/S.2695, also known as the Survivor Outreach and Support Campus Act, which would amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to require institutions of higher education to have an independent advocate for campus sexual assault prevention and response.

WJH
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