



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1587

Resolution calling upon the United States Congress to pass and the President to sign H.R. 2151/S.954, the Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act, which would recognize cyberbullying as a form of harassment and require higher education institutions to enact anti-harassment policies protecting students based on sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, race, color, national origin, sex, and disability.

By Council Members Dromm, Koslowitz and Gentile

Whereas, Tyler Clementi was an intelligent, talented, gay 18-year-old student who began his first year at Rutgers University in the fall of 2010; and

Whereas, Just weeks into that first year, Tyler took his own life on September 22, 2010 after learning that his college roommate filmed and broadcast over the Internet an otherwise private, intimate sexual encounter between Tyler and another man in their dorm room; and

Whereas, Tyler's suicide and the shameful invasion of privacy leading to it drew national attention to the problem of cyberbullying and harassment among college students; and

Whereas, According to a 2014 study by Carlos P. Zalaquett, Ph.D. and Seria Shia J. Chatters, Ph.D., "Cyberbullying in College: Frequency, Characteristics, and Practical Implications," one in five college students becomes a victim of cyberbullying and harassment; and

Whereas, According to a 2012 report by the Human Rights Campaign, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender students are nearly twice as likely as their peers to experience harassment based on their sexual orientation or gender identity; and

Whereas, There is currently no federal requirement that U.S. colleges and universities have policies in place protecting students and employees from cyberbullying or from other forms of harassment based on sexual

orientation, or gender identity; and

Whereas, H.R. 2151/S.954, known as the Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act (the “Tyler Clementi Act”), was reintroduced by U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and U.S. Representative Mark Pocan (D-WI) to recognize cyberbullying and other forms of harassment via electronic communications as serious issues among college students; and

Whereas, The Tyler Clementi Act would require institutions of higher education that receive federal funding to establish policies prohibiting harassment in all forms, including via electronic communications, based on sexual orientation and gender identity as well as religion, race, color, national origin, sex, and disability; and

Whereas, These policies would promote campus anti-harassment education, counseling and other resources that could lead to a decrease in cyberbullying and harassment in college communities and possibly save many potential victims’ lives; and

Whereas, New York City is home to dozens of colleges, universities and institutions of higher learning that would benefit from the mandated policies and heightened awareness about harassment promoted under the Tyler Clementi Act; 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. 2151/S.954, the Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act, which would recognize cyberbullying as a form of harassment and require higher education institutions to enact anti-harassment policies protecting students based on sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, race, color, national origin, sex, and disability.

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