



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 580

Resolution calling on the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Office of Public Safety to update its mandatory security guard training curriculum to include sexual harassment prevention and bystander intervention training for all security guards who work in nightlife establishments.

By Council Members Espinal, Moya, Levine, Rivera and Gibson

Whereas, Every 98 seconds a person in the United States is sexually assaulted, according to statistics from RAINN, the country's largest organization focused on preventing sexual violence; and

Whereas, While sexual assault and harassment can occur in any public or private space, nightlife venues are a common location for this type of behavior; and

Whereas, Studies consistently show that a majority of women expect to experience sexual harassment during a night out with friends and view this as a normal part of the nightlife experience; and

Whereas, Alcohol also acts as a catalyst for sexual assault, as studies consistently indicate that alcohol consumption is a factor in nearly half of all sexual assault cases in America; and

Whereas, Research also shows that nightlife establishment staff rarely intervene in instances of sexual harassment because such behavior is assumed to be a normal part of nightlife culture; and

Whereas, While nightlife venues are designed for socializing and are traditionally romantically charged, they should also be free from unwanted sexual advances and harassment; and

Whereas, Creating an atmosphere that limits the ability to commit opportunistic acts of sexual harassment and assault helps to prevent the normalization of sexual harassment in nightlife establishments; and

Whereas, However, in environments with a lax approach, this attitude greatly enhances the threat and incidence of offending behavior; and

Whereas, As the #MeToo movement has shown, the ability of sexual abusers to act with impunity for so long has, in part, been facilitated by a capitulation that sexual harassment is simply part of an industry or culture; and

Whereas, To combat such attitudes and change the culture of nightlife there needs to be clear indicators that sexual harassment will not be tolerated or ignored; and

Whereas, Bystander intervention training has proven to be one approach with demonstrated success in curtailing the prevalence of sexual assaults; and

Whereas, Bystander intervention training has been used in schools and on college campuses across the country to teach students how to safely intervene if they see sexual harassment or assault unfolding; and

Whereas, This training is powerful because it communicates to victims that they have allies and that their safety is a community responsibility, not simply an individual one; and

Whereas, At the same time, it indicates to offenders that their aggressive actions will not be tolerated; and

Whereas, Similarly, other training programs such as those offered through the ‘Safe Bars!’ program specifically target nightlife establishment staff by providing them with strategies to prevent sexual harassment and assault in their venues; and

Whereas, As workers on the frontlines of nightlife establishments, security guards have an important role to play in preventing and intervening in sexual harassment and assault; and

Whereas, Security guards have both the authority and the responsibility to ensure that their nightlife venue is safe for all patrons; and

Whereas, Security guards in New York are currently licensed under the New York State Division of Licensing Services; and

Whereas, In order to obtain a license in New York, security guards must also undertake mandatory training that is administered by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Office of Public

Safety; and

Whereas, While the minimum standards for the training curriculum includes topics such as legal powers, ethics and conduct, and public relations, there are currently no requirements for training on sexual harassment prevention or intervention; and

Whereas, Educating security guards on effective methods to identify, prevent and intervene in sexual harassment would be an important step in making nightlife spaces more safe for patrons; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Office of Public Safety update its mandatory security guard training curriculum to include sexual harassment prevention and intervention training for all security guards who work in nightlife establishments.

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