



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 581

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass A. 6502, an act to amend the executive law in relation to enacting the SAFETY act, which would prohibit discrimination and harassment in New York State Office of Children and Family Services facilities and require that facility staff be trained to respond appropriately to such behavior.

By Council Members James, Sears, Foster, Gonzalez, Liu, Mealy, Mendez, Palma, White Jr. and Jackson

Whereas, A recent report by the American Civil Liberties Union and Human Rights Watch (“Report”) uncovered incidences of sexual abuse, discrimination, and harassment of incarcerated girls at Lansing and Tyrone, two juvenile justice facilities run by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (“OCFS”); and

Whereas, The SAFETY Act (“Act”) would clearly define discrimination and harassment, and protect children under the supervision of OCFS juvenile facilities from discrimination or harassment based on race, color, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex; and

Whereas, The Act would require OCFS to (i) develop anti-discrimination policies, (ii) institute procedures for reporting acts of discrimination, and (iii) train OCFS facility staff to maintain a harassment-free environment and respond appropriately to inappropriate behavior; and

Whereas, Youths in remotely located juvenile justice facilities are allowed limited contact with the world outside of incarceration facilities, and often the only people they can contact concerning abuses or wrongdoing are staff members within the facilities who may have committed the abuses themselves; and

Whereas, The Act would provide protection to those who report discrimination or harassment in OCFS facilities; and

Whereas, Improving the conditions for children in OCFS facilities is essential to ensuring the proper

growth and rehabilitation of troubled New York City and New York State children; now, therefore be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass A. 6502, an act to amend the executive law in relation to enacting the SAFETY act, which would prohibit discrimination and harassment in New York State Office of Children and Family Services facilities and require that facility staff be trained to respond appropriately to such behavior.

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