



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 196

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass the "Dignity For All Students Act" (A.03661-C/S.01987B), a bill that would establish policies and procedures to provide all students in public schools with an environment free of harassment and discrimination based on actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex.

By Council Members Dromm, Chin, Comrie, Ferreras, Fidler, Gonzalez, James, Koppell, Koslowitz, Recchia, Rose, Van Bramer, Rodriguez, Mark-Viverito, Lappin and Nelson

Whereas, Many students in the New York City school system are affected by discrimination and harassment that interferes with such students' educational performance, opportunities and emotional or physical well-being and the well-being of the entire school community; and

Whereas, A 2005 survey on the prevalence of bias-based harassment in New York schools commissioned by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) found that more than one-third (39%) of New York students reported that bullying, name-calling, and harassment is a serious problem in school; and

Whereas, According to this GLSEN survey, the most commonly reported harassment was based on physical appearance, with 66% of students reporting that people at school were harassed at least sometimes because of their looks or body size; and

Whereas, Furthermore, the GLSEN survey found that the next most common form of bullying and harassment, reported by 57% of respondents, was based on how people expressed their gender, or because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation; and

Whereas, Bullying, harassment and intimidation can interfere with a student's ability to learn and can lead to lower grades, skipping school and engaging in high risk behaviors like drug use, alcohol abuse, and

even suicide; and

Whereas, The purpose of the "Dignity For All Students Act" (DASA) is to afford all students an environment free of any harassment that substantially interferes with their education and free of discrimination based on actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex; and

Whereas, DASA would require school districts to establish policies and guidelines to create a school environment free of discrimination and harassment and to establish guidelines for training school personnel; and

Whereas, The bill would also require school districts to establish guidelines for developing nondiscriminatory instructional and counseling methods and to ensure that specially trained staff would be available at every school to handle human relations in the areas of prohibited conduct; and

Whereas, The State Education Commissioner would be required to create a procedure whereby incidents of discrimination and harassment on school grounds or at school functions are reported to the State Education Department at least annually; and

Whereas, Additionally, DASA would provide protection for people who report incidents of discrimination or harassment; and

Whereas, Finally, DASA would also mandate that a component to increase sensitivity awareness to harassment and discrimination be incorporated into the civility, citizenship and character education curriculum currently required; and

Whereas, The enactment of DASA would benefit the children of New York City by helping to create a safe, welcoming and supportive school environment whereby students can concentrate on their academic and personal growth; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass the "Dignity For All Students Act" (A.03661-C/S.01987B), a bill that would establish policies and procedures

to provide all students in public schools with an environment free of harassment and discrimination based on actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex.

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JA
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