

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 44

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 33

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 44—Relative to National Day of Silence.

[Filed with Secretary of State May 9, 2013.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 44, Ammiano. National Day of Silence: discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students.

This measure would declare support for the goals and ideals of the National Day of Silence and would encourage school districts in the state to enforce laws and policies that prohibit name calling, bullying, harassment, and discrimination against all students, teachers, and other school staff regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.

WHEREAS, The National Day of Silence is a day in which students take a vow of silence to bring attention to the antilesbian, antigay, antibisexual, and antitransgender name calling, bullying, and harassment faced by individuals in schools; and

WHEREAS, The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network designates the third Friday of every April as the National Day of Silence; and

WHEREAS, Hundreds of thousands of students at more than 8,000 schools have participated in the National Day of Silence in past years; and

WHEREAS, The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network's 2011 National School Climate Survey illustrates the pervasive harassment and victimization faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students by documenting their experiences within the preceding academic year; and

WHEREAS, Nearly 82 percent of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students reported being verbally harassed by their peers at school because of their sexual orientation, and more than 60 percent because of their gender expression; and

WHEREAS, More than 38 percent of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students reported being physically harassed by their peers at school because of their sexual orientation, and over 27 percent because of their gender expression; and

WHEREAS, Over 18 percent of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students reported being physically assaulted by their peers at school because of their sexual orientation, and more than 12 percent because of their gender expression; and

WHEREAS, More than 60 percent of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students reported that they felt unsafe in school, and nearly 30

percent reported missing at least one entire schoolday in the preceding month because of safety concerns; and

WHEREAS, Transgender students were more likely than all other students to report feeling unsafe at school because of their gender expression; and

WHEREAS, According to the National Transgender Discrimination Survey, those who expressed a transgender identity or gender nonconformity while in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive, reported alarming rates of harassment, physical assault, and sexual violence so severe that almost 15 percent of those surveyed had to leave school; and

WHEREAS, Student academic performance is affected such that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students who experienced high levels of verbal harassment because of their sexual orientation or gender expression report a grade point average nearly a one-half grade lower than those of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students who experienced low levels of harassment; and

WHEREAS, The presence of supportive staff contributed to a range of positive indicators including fewer reports of missing school, fewer reports of feeling unsafe, greater academic achievement, higher educational aspirations, and a greater sense of school belonging; and

WHEREAS, In the State of California, we have adopted laws and policies that prohibit name calling, bullying, harassment, and discrimination against students on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity or expression; and

WHEREAS, Every child should be guaranteed an education free from name calling, bullying, harassment, and discrimination regardless of his or her sexual orientation and gender identity or expression; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature of the State of California supports the goals and ideals of the National Day of Silence and encourages school districts in the State of California to enforce laws and policies that prohibit name calling, bullying, harassment, and discrimination against all students, teachers, and other school staff regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity or expression, so that California's schools are institutions where all individuals are able to focus on learning; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.