

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 155

**Introduced by Assembly Member Bocanegra
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Bonta, Bradford, Buchanan, and
Ian Calderon)**

May 28, 2014

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 155—Relative to childhood
brain development.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 155, as introduced, Bocanegra. Childhood brain development:
adverse experiences: toxic stress.

This measure would urge the Governor to identify evidence-based
solutions to reduce children's exposure to adverse childhood
experiences, address the impacts of those experiences, and invest in
preventive health care and mental health and wellness interventions.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Research over the last two decades in the evolving
2 fields of neuroscience, molecular biology, public health, genomics,
3 and epigenetics reveals that experiences in the first few years of
4 life build changes into the biology of the human body that, in turn,
5 influence the person's physical and mental health over his or her
6 lifetime; and
7 WHEREAS, Adverse childhood experiences are traumatic
8 experiences that occur during childhood, including physical,
9 emotional or sexual abuse, physical and emotional neglect,
10 household dysfunction, including substance abuse, untreated mental
11 illness or incarceration of a household member, domestic violence,

1 or separation or divorce involving household members, that can
2 have a profound effect on a child’s developing brain and body and
3 can result in poor health during the person’s adulthood; and

4 WHEREAS, The original 1998 Adverse Childhood Experiences
5 Study, which surveyed approximately 17,000 adult Californians,
6 found that two-thirds of participants had at least one adverse
7 childhood experience and one in six participants had four or more
8 adverse childhood experiences; and

9 WHEREAS, The Adverse Childhood Experience Study also
10 found a strong correlation between the number of adverse
11 childhood experiences and a person’s risk for disease and negative
12 health behaviors; and

13 WHEREAS, Researchers found that a person with four or more
14 adverse childhood experiences was 2.4 times more likely to have
15 a stroke, 2.2 times more likely to have ischemic heart disease, 2
16 times more likely to have chronic pulmonary obstructive disease,
17 1.9 times more likely to have a type of cancer, and 1.6 times more
18 likely to have diabetes; and

19 WHEREAS, Researchers found that a person with four or more
20 adverse childhood experiences was 12.2 times more likely to
21 attempt suicide, 10.3 times more likely to use injection drugs, and
22 7.4 times more likely to be an alcoholic; and

23 WHEREAS, The life expectancy of a person with six or more
24 adverse childhood experiences is 20 years shorter than a person
25 with no adverse childhood experiences; and

26 WHEREAS, These early adverse experiences literally shape the
27 physical architecture of a child’s developing brain and establish
28 either a sturdy or a fragile foundation for all the learning, health,
29 and behavior that follow; and

30 WHEREAS, Strong, frequent, or prolonged stress in childhood
31 caused by adverse childhood experiences can become toxic stress,
32 impacting the development of a child’s fundamental brain
33 architecture and stress response systems; and

34 WHEREAS, Early childhood offers a unique window of
35 opportunity to prevent and heal the impacts of adverse childhood
36 experiences and toxic stress on a child’s brain and body; and

37 WHEREAS, A child’s brain continues to develop through
38 adolescence and into young adulthood; and

39 WHEREAS, The emerging science and research on toxic stress
40 and adverse childhood experiences evidence a growing public

1 health crisis for the state with implications for the state’s
2 educational, juvenile justice, criminal justice, and public health
3 systems; and

4 WHEREAS, Adverse childhood experiences can significantly
5 impact a child’s success in education; and

6 WHEREAS, The Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative (TLPI)
7 found that neurobiological, epigenetics, and psychological studies
8 have shown that traumatic experiences in childhood and
9 adolescence can diminish concentration, memory, and the
10 organizational and language abilities students need to succeed in
11 school, thereby negatively impacting a student’s academic
12 performance, classroom behavior, and the ability to form
13 relationships; and

14 WHEREAS, A child with four or more adverse childhood
15 experiences is 46 times more likely to have learning or emotional
16 problems; and

17 WHEREAS, A woman with seven or more adverse childhood
18 experiences is 5.5 times more likely to become pregnant as a
19 teenager; and

20 WHEREAS, Adverse childhood experiences can affect a child’s
21 future contact with the criminal justice system; and

22 WHEREAS, A woman with three violent adverse childhood
23 experiences is 3.5 times more likely to become the victim of
24 intimate partner violence, while a man with three violent adverse
25 childhood experiences is 3.8 times more likely to perpetrate
26 intimate partner violence; and

27 WHEREAS, A critical factor in buffering children from the
28 effects of toxic stress and adverse childhood experiences is the
29 existence of supportive, stable relationships between children and
30 their families, caregivers, and other important adults in their lives;
31 and

32 WHEREAS, Positively influencing the architecture of a child’s
33 developing brain is more effective and less costly than attempting
34 to correct poor learning, health, and behaviors later in life; now,
35 therefore, be it

36 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
37 *thereof concurring, That the Legislature urges the Governor to*
38 *reduce children’s exposure to adverse childhood experiences,*
39 *address the impacts of those experiences, and invest in preventive*

1 health care and mental health and wellness interventions; and be
2 it further

3 *Resolved*, That the Legislature urges the Governor of California,
4 in doing the foregoing, to consider the principles of brain
5 development, the intimate connection between mental and physical
6 health, the concepts of toxic stress, adverse childhood experiences,
7 buffering relationships, and the roles of early intervention and
8 investment in children as important strategies; and be it further

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

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