

Senate Concurrent Resolution

No. 73

Introduced by Senator Yee

March 13, 2012

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 73—Relative to school districts.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 73, as amended, Yee. ~~Child~~ *School districts: child sexual abuse curriculum.*

This measure would declare that the Legislature encourages school districts to include *age-appropriate* instruction related to child sexual abuse in their curriculum in order to help pupils understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate conduct in situations where child sexual abuse could occur, and to provide pupils with resources on how to handle these potentially dangerous situations.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, Child sexual abuse has become the subject of great
- 2 community concern and the focus of many legislative and
- 3 professional initiatives, as evidenced by the expanding body of
- 4 literature on sexual abuse, public declarations by adult survivors,
- 5 and increased media coverage of sexual abuse issues; and
- 6 WHEREAS, Child sexual abuse has been reported up to 80,000
- 7 times a year, but the number of unreported instances is far greater
- 8 because the children are afraid to tell anyone what has happened,
- 9 and the legal procedure for validating an episode is difficult; and
- 10 WHEREAS, Child sexual abuse can take place within the home,
- 11 by a parent, stepparent, sibling, or other relative, as well as outside

1 of the home by a friend, neighbor, child care person, teacher, or
2 stranger; and

3 WHEREAS, A child five years of age or older who knows and
4 cares for the abuser often becomes trapped between affection or
5 loyalty towards the abuser and the sense that the sexual activities
6 are terribly wrong. If the child attempts to break away from the
7 sexual relationship, the abuser may threaten the child with violence
8 or loss of love, and when the sexual abuse occurs within the family,
9 the child may fear anger, jealousy, the shame of other family
10 members, or that the family will break up if the secret is told; and

11 WHEREAS, The first indicators of sexual abuse may not be
12 physical, but rather behavioral changes or abnormalities. Often
13 there are no obvious external signs of child sexual abuse, and many
14 signs can only be detected through a physical examination by a
15 physician; and

16 WHEREAS, A child is not psychologically prepared to cope
17 with repeated sexual stimulation, and can develop a variety of
18 distressing feelings, thoughts, and behaviors resulting from the
19 inability to cope with the overstimulation; and

20 WHEREAS, The effects of sexual abuse extend far beyond
21 childhood, since a child who is the victim of prolonged sexual
22 abuse usually develops low self-esteem and a feeling of
23 worthlessness, and may become withdrawn and mistrustful of
24 adults; and

25 WHEREAS, Many sexually abused children have difficulty
26 relating to others except on sexual terms, may themselves become
27 child abusers or have other serious problems when they reach
28 adulthood, and often develop an abnormal or distorted view of sex
29 that can lead to difficulty with intimate relationships later in life;
30 and

31 WHEREAS, If childhood sexual abuse is not treated, long-term
32 symptoms can ~~go on~~ *continue* through adulthood, including, but
33 not limited to, post traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression
34 and thoughts of suicide, sexual anxiety and disorders, low
35 self-esteem, and unhealthy behaviors such as alcohol, drug,
36 self-harm, or eating problems; and

37 WHEREAS, Sexually abused children and their families need
38 immediate professional evaluation and treatment in order to help
39 the abused children regain a sense of self-esteem, cope with

1 feelings of guilt about the abuse, and begin the process of
2 overcoming the trauma; now, therefore, be it

3 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
4 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature hereby encourages school
5 districts to include *age-appropriate* instruction related to child
6 sexual abuse in their curriculum in order to help pupils understand
7 the difference between appropriate and inappropriate conduct in
8 situations where child sexual abuse could occur, and to provide
9 pupils with resources on how to handle these potentially dangerous
10 situations; and be it further

11 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
12 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.