

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 536 Session of
2001

INTRODUCED BY SCHWARTZ, KUKOVICH, WAGNER, MUSTO, COSTA,
TILGHMAN, BODACK, O'PAKE, STACK, LAVALLE, KITCHEN,
TARTAGLIONE, MELLOW, MOWERY AND LOGAN, FEBRUARY 16, 2001

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 16, 2001

AN ACT

1 Establishing the Student Antiviolence Education Grant Program;
2 providing for duties of the Department of Education; and
3 making an appropriation.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Student
8 Antiviolence Education Grant Program Act.

9 Section 2. Declaration of policy.

10 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

11 (1) Government and community officials, as well as
12 medical and educational professionals, are referring to
13 violence as an epidemic.

14 (2) Between 1979 and 1998, gunfire killed nearly 84,000
15 children and teens in America.

16 (3) There are nearly 3,000,000 incidents of crime on or
17 near school grounds each year.

18 (4) According to the Children's Defense Fund, gun-

1 related violence took the lives of 3,761 American children
2 and teens in 2000. This is at least one every two and a half
3 hours and nearly ten every day.

4 (5) Violence is a learned behavior. The basic values,
5 attitudes, behavior patterns and communication skills
6 acquired early in life are likely to be key in developing
7 predisposition for violent behavior later in life.

8 (6) School districts have the responsibility of
9 providing expelled students with an alternative education.

10 Section 3. Definitions.

11 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
12 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
13 context clearly indicates otherwise:

14 "Department." The Department of Education of the
15 Commonwealth.

16 "SAVE Program." The Student Antiviolence Education Grant
17 Program established under this act.

18 Section 4. SAVE Program.

19 (a) Establishment.--The Student Antiviolence Education Grant
20 Program is hereby established in the department.

21 (b) Application by school districts.--A school district may
22 apply to the department for a SAVE grant.

23 (c) Award of grants.--The amount of each grant shall not
24 exceed \$100,000 per year. A grant may be renewed up to two
25 additional years. A grant shall be made only when the school
26 district demonstrates that it can match 50% of the funds from
27 any non-State source. Priority will be given to those school
28 districts located in areas with a high rate of violence and to
29 those with a high percentage of suspensions or expulsions, based
30 on a formula to be developed by the department.

(d) Purpose.--Grants shall be used to create antiviolence programs to supplement alternative education programs for school-age children who have violated school policies related to weapons, alcohol or drugs or intentional injury to another person or who have been expelled or served two or more long-term suspensions within one school year. The antiviolence programs shall include, but are not limited to, at least one of the following elements:

(1) Instruction in the adverse effects of violent behavior.

(2) Instruction in conflict resolution skills.

(3) Instruction in decision-making skills.

(4) Instruction in refusal skills for resisting peer pressure.

(5) Teacher training and staff development in violence prevention.

(6) Student and family counseling in violence prevention and conflict resolution.

(7) Establishment of student community service programs.

(8) Training for students in peer mediation.

(9) Establishment of a mentor program.

(10) Establishment of linkages to existing health and human service agencies.

(e) Annual audits.--Programs funded by SAVE Program grants shall be audited annually by the department.

(f) Annual report.--The department shall submit an annual report to the Education Committee of the Senate and the Education Committee of the House of Representatives, evaluating the programs funded by SAVE Program grants and including the department's recommendations for Statewide program

1 applicability.

2 (g) Regulations.--The department shall promulgate
3 regulations to carry out this act.

4 Section 5. Appropriation.

5 The sum of \$500,000, or as much thereof as may be necessary,
6 is hereby appropriated to the Department of Education for the
7 fiscal year July 1, 2001, to June 30, 2002, to carry out the
8 provisions of this act.

9 Section 6. Effective date.

10 This act shall take effect immediately.