
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 378 Session of
2017

INTRODUCED BY V. BROWN, FRANKEL, READSHAW, THOMAS, VAZQUEZ AND
YOUNGBLOOD, JUNE 6, 2017

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, JUNE 6, 2017

A RESOLUTION

1 Declaring youth violence as a public health epidemic and
2 supporting the establishment of Statewide trauma-informed
3 education.

4 WHEREAS, Youths across this Commonwealth are committing acts
5 of violence against one another and throughout their
6 communities; and

7 WHEREAS, A national survey by the Centers for Disease Control
8 and Prevention (CDC) found that United States adults reported
9 approximately 1.56 million incidents of victimization by
10 perpetrators estimated to be between 12 and 20 years of age; and

11 WHEREAS, According to the CDC, violence is a serious public
12 health problem in the United States and affects people in all
13 stages of life; and

14 WHEREAS, In 2010, more than 738,000 young people 10 to 24
15 years of age were treated in emergency departments for homicide
16 and assault-related injuries which translated into \$16.2 billion
17 in lifetime medical and work-loss costs; and

18 WHEREAS, The CDC reports that many people survive violence

1 and are left with permanent physical and emotional scars; and

2 WHEREAS, The CDC further reports that violence erodes
3 communities by reducing productivity, decreasing property values
4 and disrupting social services; and

5 WHEREAS, A national initiative lead by the CDC, Striving to
6 Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere, assists communities in
7 applying a public health perspective to preventing youth
8 violence; and

9 WHEREAS, In 1985, former United States Surgeon General C.
10 Everett Koop declared violence a public health issue and called
11 for the application of the science of public health to the
12 treatment and prevention of violence; and

13 WHEREAS, In 2000, former United States Surgeon General David
14 Satcher declared youth violence a public health epidemic; and

15 WHEREAS, Dr. Satcher released a report that deems youth
16 violence as a threat to public health and calls for Federal,
17 state, local and private entities to invest in research on youth
18 violence and gain knowledge to aid intervention programs; and

19 WHEREAS, The report states that the public health approach to
20 youth violence involves identifying risk and protective factors,
21 determining how they work, making the public aware of these
22 findings and designing programs to prevent or stop the violence;
23 and

24 WHEREAS, The 2000 public health report calls for national
25 resolve to: confront the problem of youth violence
26 systematically, facilitate entry of youths into effective
27 intervention programs rather than incarceration, improve public
28 awareness of effective interventions, convene youths, families,
29 researchers and public and private organizations for a periodic
30 youth violence summit, develop new collaborative

1 multidisciplinary partnerships and hold periodic, highly visible
2 national summits; and

3 WHEREAS, An individual's characteristics, experiences and
4 environmental conditions during childhood and adolescence are
5 indicators of future violent behavior; and

6 WHEREAS, The peak ages of offending are 15 through 18 years
7 of age, the years that students spend in high school; and

8 WHEREAS, There is concern about high school dropout rates,
9 academic performance and violence in schools across this
10 Commonwealth; and

11 WHEREAS, According to the Yale School of Medicine Child Study
12 Center, the Comer School Development Program offers low-
13 achieving schools assistance in creating a conducive learning
14 environment while providing a solid foundation for students; and

15 WHEREAS, The mission of the Yale School of Medicine Child
16 Study Center is to improve the mental health of children and
17 families, advance understanding of their psychological and
18 developmental needs, and treat and prevent childhood mental
19 illness through the integration of research, clinical practice
20 and professional training; and

21 WHEREAS, The Comer School Development Program is an operating
22 system comprised of three teams: the School Planning and
23 Management Team, the Student and Staff Support Team and the
24 Parent Team, which work together to create a Comprehensive
25 School Plan; and

26 WHEREAS, The Comer School Development Program model is guided
27 by three principles: decision making by consensus, no-fault
28 problem solving and collaboration; and

29 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania State Conference of the National
30 Association for the Advancement of Colored People, through its

1 Education Committee members, has given testimony before the
2 Education Committee of the House of Representatives calling for
3 attention to the impact of trauma brought about by violence and
4 other adverse conditions on children's academic performance as
5 well as their relationship with school and the broader society;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, Due to the violence epidemic, youths suffer from
8 either primary or secondary trauma; and

9 WHEREAS, Primary trauma is trauma associated with the violent
10 death of a loved one and secondary trauma results from exposure
11 to violence present within their community; and

12 WHEREAS, Exposure to violence in families and communities, as
13 well as exposure to homicidal death, can lead to youth-specific
14 post-traumatic stress disorder with complex effects as well as
15 homicidal grief; and

16 WHEREAS, Trauma is not easily visible within youths because
17 it requires proper assessment and, due to the amount of violence
18 youths are currently exposed to, measures should be taken to
19 properly assess the issue; and

20 WHEREAS, The experience of trauma impacts children of all
21 situations and conditions across this Commonwealth; and

22 WHEREAS, In August 2007, the CDC deemed schools as providing
23 "a critical opportunity for changing societal behavior because
24 nearly the entire population is engaged in this institution for
25 many years, starting at an early and formative period" and
26 "Universal school-based violence prevention programs represent
27 an important means of reducing violent and aggressive behavior
28 in the United States"; and

29 WHEREAS, On March 25, 2013, House Resolution No. 191, which
30 declared youth violence a public health epidemic and supported

1 the establishment of Statewide trauma-informed education, was
2 introduced in the House of Representatives; and

3 WHEREAS, On April 22, 2013, House Resolution No. 191 received
4 consideration on the House floor and was adopted by the House
5 chamber by a vote of 187-9; and

6 WHEREAS, On September 19, 2016, in response to the call to
7 action outlined in House Resolution No. 191, a team of
8 stakeholders from the Pennsylvania Department of Education
9 joined 14 other states in attending a White House summit titled
10 Trauma-Informed Approaches in Schools; and

11 WHEREAS, Following the Pennsylvania Department of Education's
12 participation at the White House summit titled Trauma-Informed
13 Approaches in Schools, it has since provided Pennsylvania-based
14 educators with critically important trauma information and
15 related resources on its publicly accessible Internet website;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, Although a great degree of progress has been made in
18 the way of effectively addressing youth violence and
19 establishing Statewide trauma-informed education, there still
20 exists a need to highlight that these two issues are
21 inextricably linked to one another and that it is in the best
22 interests of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the
23 Pennsylvania Department of Education to make these issues a
24 priority during the 2017-2018 legislative session and beyond;
25 therefore be it

26 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives declare youth
27 violence as a public health epidemic and support the
28 establishment of Statewide trauma-informed education.