
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 117 Session of
2019

INTRODUCED BY KIRKLAND, SCHLOSSBERG, READSHAW, HILL-EVANS,
MCNEILL, MURT, CIRESI, KINSEY AND FITZGERALD, MARCH 6, 2019

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY, MARCH 6, 2019

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the residents of this Commonwealth to become active
2 bystanders when witnessing a hate crime take place.

3 WHEREAS, The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines a
4 hate crime as a "criminal offense against a person or property
5 motivated in whole or in part by an offender's bias against a
6 race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity,
7 gender, or gender identity"; and

8 WHEREAS, Synonymous with the use of hate crime as defined by
9 the FBI, the Commonwealth uses ethnic intimidation to refer to a
10 malicious intention toward the race, color, religion or national
11 origin of another individual; and

12 WHEREAS, Reported hate crimes increased by 17% in the United
13 States and by more than 27% in this Commonwealth in 2017; and

14 WHEREAS, The "bystander effect" is a social psychological
15 phenomenon in which the amount of time it takes an individual to
16 take action varies depending on how many other observers are
17 nearby; and

18 WHEREAS, According to the University of Manchester, the

1 problem with passive bystanders is that they do not challenge an
2 aggressor's prejudicial or biased behavior; and

3 WHEREAS, Consequently more serious acts of discrimination,
4 hate and violence can ensue as a result of the inaction of
5 passive bystanders; and

6 WHEREAS, In contrast, the University of Manchester describes
7 an active bystander as someone who takes the responsibility to
8 act when the bystander becomes aware of a problematic situation;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, The Scottish government's Independent Advisory Group
11 on Hate Crime, Prejudice and Community Cohesion suggests that
12 responsibility for tackling hate crime in society should extend
13 beyond the criminal justice system; and

14 WHEREAS, The Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime,
15 Prejudice and Community Cohesion also suggests that bystander
16 intervention is an effective way to stop the normalization of
17 prejudicial and biased behavior; and

18 WHEREAS, The University of Manchester recommends three
19 strategies as safe, active bystander techniques: remove,
20 distract and delegate; and

21 WHEREAS, Removing a victim from a problematic, discriminating
22 situation directly disrupts and defuses the situation and
23 ensures the victim's safety; and

24 WHEREAS, In order to derail a hateful conversation and
25 obstruct further problematic actions by an aggressor, it is
26 effective to distract the aggressor with a direct statement such
27 as, "I don't like what you just did"; and

28 WHEREAS, Delegating the intervention to someone nearby such
29 as a police officer, teacher or manager can also be a safe way
30 to disrupt an individual's prejudicial behavior; and

1 WHEREAS, Speaking up, being an active citizen and refusing to
2 be a passive bystander shows responsible leadership and can make
3 our society safer and less welcoming to prejudice; therefore be
4 it

5 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives urge the
6 residents of this Commonwealth to become active bystanders when
7 witnessing a hate crime take place.