
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 119 Session of
2019

INTRODUCED BY KIRKLAND, HILL-EVANS, KINSEY, MURT, BERNSTINE,
SCHLOSSBERG, LONGIETTI, BURNS, McNEILL, WARREN, BURGOS,
SCHWEYER, CIRESI, DAVIDSON, FITZGERALD, WHEATLEY AND FREEMAN,
MARCH 6, 2019

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH, MARCH 6, 2019

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing emotional abuse of children and its deleterious
2 effect on all individuals in this Commonwealth.

3 WHEREAS, Dorota Iwaniec, Ph.D, has described emotional abuse
4 as "a persistent, chronic pattern of parental behaviour...which
5 over the years becomes internalised and gives rise to the
6 feeling that the child alone is to blame"; and

7 WHEREAS, Emotional abuse of children takes many forms and may
8 include rejection, isolation, terrorization, intentional lack of
9 acknowledgment, corruption, verbal assault and overpressure to
10 follow a parent's or guardian's demands; and

11 WHEREAS, Childhood emotional abuse can occur in unexpected
12 environments, perpetrated in homes, foster homes and group homes
13 as well as secure care and criminal justice facilities; and

14 WHEREAS, In 2008, approximately 55,196 children, 7.3% of all
15 substantiated cases of child maltreatment, were victims of
16 childhood emotional abuse; and

17 WHEREAS, This figure may not reflect the full scope of the

1 problem as childhood emotional abuse can be difficult to detect,
2 define and measure, especially across generations; and

3 WHEREAS, Research published in 2001 estimated that
4 psychological maltreatment may have been significantly present
5 in the childhood histories of more than one-third of the general
6 adult population of the United States; and

7 WHEREAS, As a public health issue, childhood emotional abuse
8 bears personal and societal costs; and

9 WHEREAS, Victim-serving organizations consider the lasting
10 effects of emotional abuse, especially childhood emotional
11 abuse, to be the "most damaging form of maltreatment"; and

12 WHEREAS, Survivors may experience lifelong patterns of
13 depression, estrangement, anxiety, low self-esteem,
14 inappropriate or troubled relationships or lack of empathy, and
15 the societal costs are great; and

16 WHEREAS, The economic impact of child abuse and neglect is an
17 estimated \$80.3 billion per year, with \$33.3 billion in direct
18 costs for hospitalization, mental health care and law
19 enforcement, and \$46.9 billion in indirect costs for special
20 education, adult homelessness, criminal justice services and
21 lost work productivity; and

22 WHEREAS, It is important to enact legislation that raises
23 awareness of childhood emotional abuse, makes detection easier,
24 facilitates home visiting and parent mutual support self-help
25 groups and provides proactive mental health services for victims
26 and abusers; and

27 WHEREAS, This type of legislation would break parents and
28 guardians, children and society from the intergenerational cycle
29 of abuse and create a healthier, safer future for Pennsylvania;
30 therefore be it

1 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize
2 emotional abuse of children and its deleterious effect on all
3 individuals in this Commonwealth.