



Office of the City Clerk

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Legislation Text

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Joint Committee: Education and Childhood Development/Health and Environmental Protection

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the City of Chicago and other communities across the nation have been scarred by violence and the loss of young and innocent lives; and

WHEREAS, each year more than 5,000 youths between the ages of 15 and 24 die because of violence, making violence the second leading cause of death among this age group; and

WHEREAS, that disturbing statistic does not take into account the younger victims, some intended and some unintended, of violence; and

WHEREAS, according to news reports, many instances of violence against or by young people arise out of squabbles and disagreements that may appear petty or childish to outsiders, but carry great importance for those involved in the disputes; and

WHEREAS, the use by young people of social media, across various platforms, seems to inflate and accelerate these interpersonal conflicts; and

WHEREAS, there is a growing perception, whether accurate or not, that urban youth see violence as the only possible response to disagreement or conflict, and that they act without regard to consequence and without regard to the permanent effects of some of their actions; and

WHEREAS, some adults seem incapable of understanding or dealing with the problems and conflicts affecting youth under their care, while other adults seem to encourage extreme responses; and

WHEREAS, more than enough families have been broken, and more than enough lives shattered, for our society to come to the realization that new approaches must be devised to divert young people away from violence; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now recognizes violence as a public health issue and is working to develop educational programs to mitigate and reduce this public health crisis; and

WHEREAS, educational programs have been devised - and have proven effective - to increase the safety of young people by educating them about the dangers of tobacco use, of alcohol and drug use, of unsafe driving practices, of unsafe sex and HIV/AIDS; and

WHEREAS, youth and adults - especially those in charge of raising young people - need to be educated in how to promote safety, especially the safety of the most vulnerable; and

WHEREAS, effective education can and must begin even before compulsory school age: pre-schoolers can be prepared so that they begin school ready to learn, including ready to learn how to promote safety; and

WHEREAS, study after study has shown that early education can have life-long beneficial effects, and thus it is time to apply early education in a manner that can positively affect our youngest by helping them learn alternatives to violent responses; and

WHEREAS, it is only through the development and wide-spread application of educational programs, appropriate to age and developmental stage of recipients, that our society can change expectations about and responses to conflict and danger; and

WHEREAS, Mothers Against Senseless Killing (MASK), an organization of those affected by violence, has proposed development of educational programs, to be incorporated into mandatory school curricula, to educate children in ways to avoid the dangers of unsafe weapons use and in ways to resolve conflict without resort to violence; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this 28th day of May, 2014, do hereby join Mothers Against Senseless Killing in calling on the Illinois General Assembly and the United States Congress to enact legislation aimed at protecting our young people by mandating development of age-appropriate and developmental stage-appropriate education programs, and incorporation of such programs into educational curricula from pre-school through grade 12; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council through a special joint committee consisting of the Committee on Education and Childhood Development and the Committee on Health and Environmental Protection conduct hearings into methods and programs for educating children, young adults and adults about the dangers of violent response to conflict; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the special joint committee invite and take testimony from interested and informed individuals and organizations and individuals to assist in dealing with this health crisis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that suitable copies of this Resolution be presented to the clerks and leadership of the Illinois Senate and the Illinois House of Representatives, and to the Illinois delegations to the United States Congress.