



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1023-2019, **Version:** A

Proposed Res. No. 1023-A

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.4844/A.6512, which would require comprehensive sexuality education for students in grades K-12 which addresses age and developmentally appropriate physical, mental, emotional and social dimensions of human sexuality and reflects the national sexuality education standards.

By Council Members Gibson, Kallos, Adams, Rivera, Ayala, Levine, Rose, Moya, Louis, Rosenthal, Lander, Koslowitz, Cumbo, Chin, Barron, Levin, Cornegy, Dromm and Powers

Whereas, According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), in 2017, 26.8 percent of New York City (NYC) high school students reported previously engaging in sexual intercourse, and 42.6 percent of students who reported being sexually active reported not using a condom during their last sexual intercourse; and

Whereas, Failure to use condoms during sexual intercourse puts sexually active students' health at risk as, according to the New York State Department of Health, in 2017, there were over 15,500 chlamydia diagnoses and 2,800 gonorrhea diagnoses of individuals aged 10-19; and

Whereas, Data also show that many NYC students' physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing are at risk due to dating violence, and according to the 2017 YRBS, 15.4 percent of all high school students experienced sexual dating violence; and

Whereas, According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, experiencing violence in relationships puts people at higher risks for violence in future relationships, including intimate partner violence and sexual violence perpetration, and the Urban Institute reports that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender teenagers have a higher risk of experiencing dating abuse than their heterosexual peers; and

Whereas, As reported by the Future of Sex Education Initiative, a partnership between Advocates for

Youth, Answer, and the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, comprehensive sexuality education helps students develop critical skills to have healthy relationships, and when schools teach their students about dating violence and implement policies that help prevent dating violence, teens are less likely to be victimized and more likely to avoid perpetrating intimate partner violence and sexual harassment; and

Whereas, New York State (NYS) does not require students to take sexuality education and only requires students to receive HIV/AIDS education each year beginning in kindergarten; and

Whereas, NYS mandates that kindergarten through fifth grade students receive sequential health education each year and requires 54 hours of health education for middle and high school students to be taught by a certified instructor; and

Whereas, Unlike the State, NYC's Department of Education (DOE) requires sixth through twelfth grade students to take health education classes that include sexuality education lessons, but DOE data show that many schools are not fulfilling this requirement; and

Whereas, During a January 2019 NYC Council Education Committee oversight hearing, DOE testified that only 37.2 percent of eighth graders received the complete 54-hour sexuality education course during the 2017-18 school year, and according to a 2016 poll conducted by the Sexual Education Alliance of New York City, only 65 percent of middle and high school students reported that their school health classes included sexuality education; and

Whereas, Pursuant to Local Law 90 of 2017, the City created a Sexual Health Education Task Force (Task Force), which, in 2018, released a report detailing the state of sexuality education in NYC schools and included eleven recommendations on how the DOE can improve on its offering and of implementation of sexuality education; and

Whereas, The Task Force found an "urgent need for policy and practice reform" regarding sexuality education in NYC and recommended that DOE increase the mandated amount of sexuality education across all

grade levels and create district-level and school-level accountability for sexuality education; and

Whereas, While the DOE has made recent efforts to address the lack of sexuality education in its schools, including the adoption of Health Ed Works, which is a four-year health education initiative, it still does not require sexuality education to be taught in all grades and advocates are concerned that many middle and high school students are still missing out on valuable sexuality education instruction; and

Whereas, The Future of Sex Education Initiative recommends that sexuality education begin in elementary school and continue through subsequent grade levels so that students can build upon their knowledge and skills as they mature; and

Whereas, A law creating statewide learning standards for comprehensive sexuality education for students in grades K-12 would help ensure that students across the City and State have the knowledge to help them make the best personal decisions regarding their health, lives, and relationships; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.4844/A.6512, which would require comprehensive sexuality education for students in grades K-12 which addresses age and developmentally appropriate physical, mental, emotional and social dimensions of human sexuality and reflects the national sexuality education standards.

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