
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 137 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY KINSEY, BULLOCK, HILL-EVANS, MADDEN, SCHLOSSBERG,
DELLOSO, JAMES, HANBIDGE, BELLMON, HADDOCK, SANCHEZ,
HOHENSTEIN AND KHAN, JUNE 2, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, JUNE 2, 2023

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating the month of October 2023 as "Bullying Prevention
2 Awareness Month" in Pennsylvania to help Pennsylvanians work
3 to recognize bullying, stop bullying and gain the tools
4 needed to appropriately deal with situations involving
5 bullies.

6 WHEREAS, Nationwide, approximately 20% of students 12 to 18
7 years of age have experienced bullying; and

8 WHEREAS, Only 38% of students feel safe at school; and

9 WHEREAS, Bullying can be verbal, physical or via the Internet
10 and can severely affect the victim's self-image, social
11 interactions and school performance, often leading to
12 insecurity, lack of self-esteem and depression in adulthood; and

13 WHEREAS, School dropout rates and absences among victims of
14 bullying are much higher than among other students; and

15 WHEREAS, Studies have shown that children who have been
16 identified as a bully by eight years of age are six times more
17 likely to have a criminal conviction by 24 years of age; and

18 WHEREAS, Children who are bullies may continue to be bullies
19 as adults and are more prone to become child and spouse abusers;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, Information about bullying suggests that there are
3 three interrelated reasons why students bully, including strong
4 needs for power and dominance, satisfaction in causing injury
5 and suffering to other students and reward for their behavior
6 with material or psychological rewards; and

7 WHEREAS, Bullying can take on many forms, including
8 derogatory comments and bad names, social exclusion or
9 isolation, hitting, kicking, shoving and spitting, lies and
10 false rumors, having money or other things taken or damaged,
11 being threatened or forced to do things and forms of racial,
12 sexual and cyber bullying; and

13 WHEREAS, Bullying is done by both girls and boys; and

14 WHEREAS, At first glance, many people may think bullying
15 behavior is easy to define as solely physical aggression, but,
16 while that can still be considered bullying today, bullying
17 behaviors can be much more complex and varied than the
18 stereotype; and

19 WHEREAS, Harmful bullying can occur quietly and covertly,
20 through gossip or on the Internet, causing emotional damage; and

21 WHEREAS, Although definitions vary from source to source,
22 most agree that an act is defined as bullying when the behavior
23 hurts or harms another person physically or emotionally and the
24 targets have difficulty stopping the behavior directed at them
25 and struggle to defend themselves; and

26 WHEREAS, Many definitions include a statement about
27 imbalance of power, described as when the student with the
28 bullying behavior has more power, either physically, socially or
29 emotionally; and

30 WHEREAS, Many definitions also include the types of bullying,

1 including overt bullying, with physical behaviors, such as
2 fighting, hitting or name calling, and covert bullying, with
3 emotional-social interactions, such as gossiping or leaving
4 someone out on purpose; and

5 WHEREAS, When students experience bullying there are effects
6 that can last long into their future, including depression, low
7 self-esteem, health problems, poor grades and suicidal thoughts;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, It might be hard to tell the difference between
10 playful teasing and bullying, but they are not the same thing;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, Teasing usually involves two or more friends who act
13 together in a way that seems fun to all the people involved and
14 they often tease each other equally, but it never involves
15 physical or emotional abuse; and

16 WHEREAS, It is also important to note that bullying is not
17 just about the implications for those targeted by the behaviors,
18 but that the behavior can impact all students in the school,
19 including those who witness the behavior and those who engage in
20 the behavior; and

21 WHEREAS, Students who bully can have a wide-ranging impact on
22 the students they bully, students who observe bullying and the
23 overall climate of the school and community; and

24 WHEREAS, When bullying continues and a school does not take
25 action, the entire school climate can be affected in many ways,
26 including the school developing an environment of fear and
27 disrespect and students having learning difficulties, feeling
28 insecure, disliking school and perceiving that teachers and
29 staff have little control and do not care about them; and

30 WHEREAS, The Office for Civil Rights in the United States

1 Department of Education and the United States Department of
2 Justice have stated that bullying may also be considered
3 harassment when it is based on a student's race, color, national
4 origin, sex, disability or religion; and

5 WHEREAS, The effects of bullying can be just as harmful to an
6 adult's emotional health as to a child's emotional health; and

7 WHEREAS, Bullying can last well into adulthood, and instead
8 of the playground, the abuse is most likely to occur in the
9 workplace; and

10 WHEREAS, According to a 2021 workplace bullying report, 30%
11 of American workers have experienced some form of workplace
12 bullying; and

13 WHEREAS, Many adults find themselves emotionally tormented by
14 fellow employees, neighbors, aggressive friends and even their
15 spouses; and

16 WHEREAS, The effects of bullying, regardless of age, can be
17 extremely psychologically damaging; and

18 WHEREAS, Harassing behaviors may include unwelcome conduct
19 such as verbal abuse, including name calling, epithets, slurs,
20 graphic or written statements, threats, physical assault or
21 other conduct that may be physically threatening, harmful or
22 humiliating; and

23 WHEREAS, There is no Federal law that specifically applies to
24 bullying, rather, when bullying is based on race, color,
25 national origin, sex, disability or religion, bullying overlaps
26 with harassment and schools are legally obligated to address it;
27 and

28 WHEREAS, "Bullying Prevention Awareness Month" is a month-
29 long effort that encourages everyone to take an active role in
30 the bullying prevention movement; therefore be it

1 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate the
2 month of October 2023 as "Bullying Prevention Awareness Month"
3 in Pennsylvania to help Pennsylvanians work to recognize
4 bullying, stop bullying and gain the tools needed to
5 appropriately deal with situations involving bullies.