

111TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. RES. 1777

Raising awareness of school pushout and promoting dignity in schools.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 17, 2010

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. COHEN, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. YARMUTH, Mrs. MALONEY, Mr. HINOJOSA, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. HIMES, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. FILNER, Ms. CHU, Mr. FATTAH, and Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

RESOLUTION

Raising awareness of school pushout and promoting dignity
in schools.

Whereas 1,300,000 students leave high school prior to graduating each year in the United States, depriving such students of reaching their full potential and rendering them without meaningful access or opportunity to thrive socially, politically, or economically;

Whereas millions of students attend public schools characterized by conditions that harm education, including corporal punishment, low academic expectations, overcrowded and unwelcoming school environments, overemphasis on high stakes testing without appropriate aca-

demic or fiscal support and that limits the ability to focus on the whole child, lack of parent, student, and community participation in school decisionmaking, poor or limited teacher training and support, inadequate screening and instruction of students with disabilities, and racial and socioeconomic isolation;

Whereas these practices disengage students from learning and remove them from the classroom, furthering a national crisis that is more accurately described as “push out”, as opposed to “drop out”, as children and youth are effectively pushed out of school;

Whereas school pushout impacts all students, but disproportionately impacts historically disenfranchised youth, including students of color, students from low-income families, students with developmental, physical, emotional, and mental disabilities, students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered, English language learners, youth in State facilities and foster care, pregnant and parenting teens, and students in the juvenile justice system and alternative schools;

Whereas school pushout is dangerously evident in the quickly growing rates of suspension, expulsion, and school arrests under “zero tolerance” discipline policies employed in many of our Nation’s schools;

Whereas rather than improve school safety, the American Psychological Association has found that suspension and expulsion negatively impact school-wide achievement and increase the risk that excluded students fall behind academically, become alienated from school, drop out, and become involved in the juvenile and criminal justice systems;

Whereas according to the Secretary of Education, over 3,300,000 students are suspended and over 100,000 students are expelled at least once each school year, often for actions that do not merit exclusion;

Whereas a first-time arrest doubles the odds of dropout, and hundreds of thousands of students are being arrested in schools, often for incidents once considered youthful misbehavior to be handled by school disciplinarians;

Whereas thousands of public schools are adopting proven and promising approaches to preventive and positive classroom behavior management and school discipline such as school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) and restorative practices, and are witnessing positive results, including a reduction of disciplinary incidents, for students and teachers alike;

Whereas local educational agencies in the Southeast are collaborating with juvenile courts, law enforcement, mental health agencies, and community organizations to reduce unnecessary school-based arrests through “school offense protocols”, and the graduation rate of one local educational agency in Georgia climbed by 20 percent after adopting its protocol; and

Whereas there are proven approaches to improving parent engagement with schools, and the positive impact that school-based efforts to engage parents can have is most profound for students from low-income families and is critical for closing the achievement gap: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) promotes a heightened awareness on the

3 part of educators and the general public about the

1 spectrum of policies and practices that lead to school
2 pushout;

3 (2) commits to working to reduce or eliminate
4 school suspensions (especially out-of-school suspen-
5 sions), expulsions, arrests, corporal punishment, and
6 placements in disciplinary alternative schools by
7 partnering with States, local education agencies, and
8 schools to adopt and implement evidence-based and
9 promising approaches to improve student engage-
10 ment and school safety, and recognizes the need for
11 effective technical assistance as well as flexibility in
12 supporting the accurate and durable implementation
13 of these practices;

14 (3) understands that proper behavior is not im-
15 plicit but should be taught explicitly starting from
16 an early age and practiced, supervised, and recog-
17 nized throughout the pre-kindergarten through grad-
18 uation school experience;

19 (4) acknowledges that educators and school
20 leaders need effective, efficient, and relevant contin-
21 uous professional development, training, and support
22 to effectively teach, encourage, and sustain those so-
23 cial skills and behaviors that characterize effective
24 teaching and learning environments for students of
25 all backgrounds;

1 (5) recognizes—

2 (A) the need to streamline and enhance
3 school climate and disciplinary data collection;
4 and

5 (B) that such data should be used in ana-
6 lyzing and revising school discipline policies, be-
7 havioral practices, and systems to produce bet-
8 ter outcomes for students and teachers; and

9 (6) supports community collaborations and
10 meaningful parental involvement to ensure that
11 schools are safe, respectful, responsible, and effective
12 teaching and learning environments that reduce—

13 (A) the likelihood of violent school behav-
14 ior; and

15 (B) the use of reactive, compliance, and
16 punishment-oriented school policies and prac-
17 tices.

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