

The Senate Education and Youth Committee offered the following substitute to SR 444:

A RESOLUTION

1 Remembering the life of Brittany Sharnay Wells and endorsing the establishment of the
2 Brittany Sharnay Wells Act in her honor; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Brittany Sharnay Wells was a beautiful and extraordinary young woman and
4 Georgia teenager, whose life ended tragically as a result of an act of teen dating violence; and

5 WHEREAS, teen dating violence is a pattern of controlling and abusive behavior of one
6 person over another within a personal relationship which includes verbal, emotional,
7 physical, and sexual abuse; and

8 WHEREAS, due to their youth and inexperience, teens are more vulnerable to dating
9 violence and less likely to recognize an abusive situation; and

10 WHEREAS, teen dating violence has become a prevalent problem in high schools and
11 middle schools across America, and one in three teens report experiencing some kind of
12 abuse in their romantic relationships; and

13 WHEREAS, girls and women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of
14 intimate partner violence, and of the young women murdered each year between the ages of
15 15 and 19, 30 percent are killed by their boyfriend or husband; and

16 WHEREAS, recent studies have shown that teen dating violence is starting at an early age,
17 reporting that many 11 to 14 year olds are able to identify aspects of teen dating abuse in
18 their social lives; and

19 WHEREAS, early abusive relationship experiences can be a precursor to dating violence and
20 abuse among older teens and can perpetuate a culture of acceptance of this type of behavior
21 within our society; and

22 WHEREAS, education is the best mechanism to stop teen dating violence and is crucial to
23 create a culture of intolerance for teen dating abuse; and

24 WHEREAS, the Brittany Sharnay Wells Act would require educational and school policies
25 that would teach Georgia students to recognize dating violence, help prevent dating violence
26 among our state's young persons, and help protect Georgia parents from the greatest of all
27 tragedies: losing a child; and

28 WHEREAS, at the 2008 Summer Meeting of the National Association of Attorneys General,
29 attorneys general from across the nation including Georgia's own Attorney General Thurbert
30 Baker passed a resolution encouraging schools to develop teen dating violence awareness
31 curriculums.

32 NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
33 join together to express their deepest regret at the passing of Brittany Sharnay Wells, extend
34 their most sincere condolences to her family, and do hereby endorse the establishment of the
35 Brittany Sharnay Wells Act in her honor.

36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
37 to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the family of Brittany Sharnay Wells.