

House Resolution 1100

By: Representatives Dickerson of the 113th, Frazier of the 126th, Dawkins-Haigler of the 91st, Hugley of the 136th, Bruce of the 61st, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Declaring youth violence as a public health epidemic and supporting statewide
2 trauma-informed education; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, youth across the United States are committing acts of violence not only against
4 one another, but also throughout our communities; and

5 WHEREAS, a national survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
6 found that American adults reported approximately 1.56 million incidents of victimization
7 by perpetrators estimated to be between 12 and 20 years of age; and

8 WHEREAS, the CDC says, "Violence is a serious public health problem in the United States.
9 From infants to the elderly, it affects people in all stages of life"; and

10 WHEREAS, the CDC further states that "[i]n 2007, more than 18,000 people were victims
11 of homicide and more than 34,000 took their own [lives]"; and

12 WHEREAS, the CDC reports that many people who survive violence are left with permanent
13 physical and emotional scars, while violence erodes communities by reducing productivity,
14 decreasing property values, and disrupting social services; and

15 WHEREAS, Striving to Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere, a national initiative led by the
16 CDC, assists communities in applying a public health perspective to preventing youth
17 violence; and

18 WHEREAS, in 1985, former United States Surgeon General C. Everett Koop declared
19 violence as a public health issue and called for the application of the science of public health
20 to treat and prevent violence, and in 2000, former United States Surgeon General David
21 Satcher declared youth violence to be a public health epidemic; and

22 WHEREAS, Dr. Satcher released a report deeming youth violence as a threat to public health
23 and called for federal, state, local, and private entities to invest in research to inform both
24 prevention and intervention programs on youth violence; and

25 WHEREAS, the report states that a public health approach to youth violence involves
26 identifying risks and protective factors, determining how they work, making the public aware
27 of these findings, and designing programs to prevent or stop the violence; and

28 WHEREAS, the 2000 public health report calls for national resolve to systematically
29 confront the problem of youth violence; to facilitate entry of youth into effective intervention
30 programs rather than incarceration; to improve public awareness of effective interventions;
31 to convene youth, families, researchers, and public and private organizations for periodic
32 youth violence summits; and to develop new collaborative multidisciplinary partnerships;
33 and

34 WHEREAS, an individual's characteristics, experiences, and environment during childhood
35 and adolescence are indicators of future violent behavior; and

36 WHEREAS, the peak years of offending encompass ages 15 through 18, which are the years
37 students spend in high school; and

38 WHEREAS, there is concern about high school dropout rates, academic performance, and
39 violence in schools across this nation; and

40 WHEREAS, according to the Yale School of Medicine Child Study Center, the Comer
41 School Development Program offers low-achieving schools assistance in creating an
42 environment conducive to learning while providing a solid foundation for students; and

43 WHEREAS, the work of the Yale School of Medicine Child Study Center has demonstrated
44 that "[w]hen teachers, administrators, parents, and/or mature adults interact with students in
45 a supportive school environment and/or culture, and provide adequate instruction in a way
46 that mediates physical, social-interactive, psycho-emotional, moral-ethical, linguistic, and
47 cognitive-intellectual development, [then] acceptable academic achievement will take place";
48 and

49 WHEREAS, the Comer School Development Program is an operating system composed of
50 a school planning and management team, a student and staff support team, and a parent team,
51 which work together to create a comprehensive school plan; and

52 WHEREAS, the Comer School Development Program model is guided by the principles of
53 decision making by consensus, no-fault problem solving, and collaboration; and

54 WHEREAS, trauma impacts children from all backgrounds and conditions across this
55 country; and

56 WHEREAS, due to the violence epidemic, youth suffer from either primary trauma, which
57 is associated with the violent death of a loved one, or secondary trauma, which results from
58 exposure to violence within their community; and

59 WHEREAS, exposure to violence in families and communities and exposure to homicidal
60 death can lead to youth-specific post-traumatic stress disorder with complex effects and
61 homicidal grief; and

62 WHEREAS, since youth are currently exposed to large amounts of violence, measures
63 should be taken to ensure that the proper assessments are made to identify trauma within
64 youth, which is not easily visible; and

65 WHEREAS, in August 2007, the CDC deemed schools as providing "a critical opportunity
66 for changing societal behavior because almost the entire population is engaged in this
67 institution for many years, starting at an early and formative period" and stated that
68 "[u]niversal school-based violence prevention programs represent an important means of
69 reducing violent and aggressive behavior in the United States."

70 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
71 the members of this body declare youth violence to be a public health epidemic and support
72 the establishment of statewide trauma-informed education to enable educators and
73 communities to reduce youth violence.

74 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the House of Representatives applauds the Promise
75 Neighborhoods Program at the United States Department of Education and requests that
76 Congress provide the necessary resources to expand the program so that it can serve more
77 communities around the nation.

78 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the House of Representatives calls upon public health
79 officials to treat youth violence as a public health epidemic in a manner that is consistent
80 with the resource allocation and attention to problem-solving of other public health crises.

81 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
82 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the President of the United
83 States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of
84 Representatives and United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials
85 as appropriate.