

Legislation Text

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Calling on the General Assembly to adopt House Bill 590, which amends the Public School Code to add curriculum requirements for Health classes across Pennsylvania to educate students in an age-appropriate manner about mental health, physical disabilities, and developmental disabilities.

WHEREAS, Thanks to inclusion efforts, most Pennsylvania students with a disability or a mental health diagnosis are now being educated in their home school districts alongside their peers; and

WHEREAS, Overall this change has been tremendous, improving outcomes and increasing opportunities for many. Such success has set the table for advancing inclusive workplaces; and

WHEREAS, However, as more and more kids with such exceptionalities are educated in inclusive environments, this sometimes leads to deeper social isolation and problems with stigma that are born more out of ignorance than intent; and

WHEREAS, Many school districts have struggled to address the information gap regarding mental health and disabilities without invading an individual's privacy; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 590 (H.B. 590) seeks to address these issues by requiring the Department of Education to create curriculum for Health classes that will provide a framework for positive discussion and increased understanding; and

WHEREAS, H.B. 590's prime sponsors - Representative Dan L. Miller and Representative Michael H. Schlossberg - hope that by guiding this discussion in a positive way, schools can help decrease stigma and support a truly inclusive experience, where more and more students know someone with a diagnosis and can support each other better, and where no one sits alone; and

WHEREAS, H.B. 590 was introduced in February 2019 and has sat in the Education Committee since its introduction; and

WHEREAS, Since October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and just this year Governor Tom Wolf declared October as "Developmental Disabilities (DD) Awareness Month," now is the time to highlight important state-level legislation such as H.B. 590; and

WHEREAS, If the General Assembly were to adopt H.B. 590, then Pennsylvania would be the first state in the country to teach mental health and disability awareness and inclusion to all its public school students; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby calls on the General Assembly to adopt House Bill 590, which amends the Public School Code to add curriculum requirements for Health classes across Pennsylvania to educate students in an age-appropriate manner about mental health, physical disabilities, and developmental disabilities.

