

Rep. Segal offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 143.

A resolution to declare October 2011 as Anti-Bullying Awareness Month in the state of Michigan.

Whereas, October is recognized across the United States of America as Anti-Bullying Awareness Month in an effort to raise public awareness about the importance of combatting this devastating societal problem; and

Whereas, Bullying continues to cause severe problems for countless children in and out of schools and online. All citizens in Michigan should be concerned about ways to reduce this very prevalent situation; and

Whereas, Bullying brings fear and hopelessness into the lives of innocent children in every corner of this state on a daily basis; and

Whereas, Victims of bullying are more likely to struggle in their classes, decrease their participation at school and drop out before graduation. Adults that were bullied as children are more prone to depression and anxiety; and

Whereas, While most adults won't tolerate similar bullying tactics at their places of work, victimized children are commonly expected to confront their abusers on their own and often feel that they have no way to defend themselves; and

Whereas, Online cyber-bullying is currently on the rise and in some ways even more insidious than physical face-to-face bullying and was the cause of a recent teen suicide in New Jersey; and

Whereas, Constant name calling, threats, physical abuse, and gossip can leave a child psychologically injured and hopeless; and

Whereas, A bully harasses and degrades a victim and victimized children need the support of parents and school administrators to thrive; and

Whereas, Inaction by adults further increases the risk and prevalence of bullying activities and such inaction can result in continued mental and physical misery for children subjected to bullying on a regular basis; and

Whereas, There is ample evidence that young bullying victims are three times more likely to consider suicide than their peers. One of these tragic suicides occurred when Matt Epling, a 14 year old student in East Lansing took his own life after being bullied; and

Whereas, Legislation was introduced in 2006 known as Matt's Safe School Law that would require every school district in Michigan to enact a ban on bullying based on a pupil's actual or perceived religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, height, weight, gender identity, socioeconomic status, or any other distinguishing characteristic or association with another person who has or is perceived to have any of these characteristics; and

Whereas, In the ensuing years, different versions of the bill have either included enumeration or have required Michigan's school districts to adopt the model policy created by Michigan's State Board of Education, which also enumerates, recognizing that listing protected categories is the only credible legislative response; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of this legislative body declare October 2011 as Anti-Bullying Awareness Month in Michigan; and be it further

Resolved, That Michigan schools, students, parents, recreation programs, religious institutions, and community organizations be encouraged to engage in a variety of awareness and

prevention activities designed to make our communities safer for all children and adolescents not only in October, but throughout the year; and be it further

Resolved, That the members of this legislative body encourage all Michigan citizens to work to protect our children from this ever-growing epidemic.