

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 105

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 216th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED DECEMBER 15, 2014

Sponsored by:

Senator THOMAS H. KEAN, JR.

District 21 (Morris, Somerset and Union)

Senator M. TERESA RUIZ

District 29 (Essex)

SYNOPSIS

Urges Merriam-Webster, Inc. and the Oxford University Press to include word upstander in their dictionary.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/8/2015)

1 **A SENATE RESOLUTION** urging Merriam-Webster, Inc. and the
2 Oxford University Press to include the word upstander in their
3 dictionaries.
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5 **WHEREAS**, An upstander is an individual who chooses to take positive
6 action in the face of injustice in society or in situations in which
7 individuals need assistance; and
8 **WHEREAS**, In 2002, Samantha Power, a Pulitzer-Prize winning author,
9 first introduced the word upstander to describe a person in her
10 book, *A Problem from Hell: America & The Age of Genocide*, who
11 defied logic, risked their careers and lives, and spoke up on behalf
12 of distant victims; and
13 **WHEREAS**, Individuals who actively opposed the injustices of the
14 Holocaust and other genocides, such as Rwanda and Darfur, have
15 increasingly been referred to as upstanders by education programs
16 and organizations; and
17 **WHEREAS**, Since 2007, the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust
18 Education's Maud Dahme Award has made use of the word
19 upstander to describe an individual who demonstrated moral
20 courage and a sense of humanity in defending others; and
21 **WHEREAS**, Holocaust educators and organizations have established
22 upstander initiatives, encouraging students and adults to stand up to
23 bullying, to not be bullies, and to take responsibility for stopping
24 bullying in their respective schools and communities; and
25 **WHEREAS**, The word upstander is also used to describe an individual
26 who stands up to bullying whether at school, home, work, house of
27 worship, or out with friends, family, colleagues, or teammates; and
28 **WHEREAS**, Bullying incidents are more likely to occur in a school
29 setting, with nearly one in every three students disclosing that they
30 have been bullied at least once while attending school; and
31 **WHEREAS**, Student bystanders are often aware of bullying incidents
32 before most adults in a school setting, with 71 percent of
33 students disclosing that they have witnessed bullying at their
34 respective schools; and
35 **WHEREAS**, More than half of bullying incidents can be stopped when
36 a peer intervenes on behalf of the student being bullied, within 10
37 seconds of the incident happening; and
38 **WHEREAS**, Anti-bullying movements across the State of New Jersey,
39 including the Tyler Clementi Foundation, a non-profit organization
40 named after the Rutgers University student who took his own life as
41 a result of being bullied, have used the word upstander to raise
42 awareness and encourage bystanders to speak up; and
43 **WHEREAS**, Nonprofit organizations, such as Facing History and
44 Ourselves, an international educational and professional
45 development organization whose mission is to engage students of
46 diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice, and
47 anti-Semitism in order to promote the development of a more
48 humane and informed society, and educational institutions have

1 utilized the word upstander in anti-bullying strategies across the
2 United States to raise awareness of the term and what it means to be
3 an upstander; and

4 **WHEREAS**, Superintendent Richard Labbe of the Sayreville School
5 District drew national attention to the word upstander while
6 addressing the locker room misconduct that led to the shut down of
7 the Sayreville High School football program; and

8 **WHEREAS**, Monica Mahal and Sarah Decker, who graduated from
9 Watchung Hills Regional High School in 2013, have started an
10 online petition asking others to properly recognize upstanders and
11 to support the movement to define upstander; and

12 **WHEREAS**, Oxford University Press has placed upstander on Oxford's
13 new words watch list earlier this year; and

14 **WHEREAS**, It is fitting and proper for this House to raise awareness of
15 the word upstander and to encourage not only citizens of the State
16 of New Jersey, but of the entire United States of America to
17 become upstanders instead of bystanders; now, therefore,

18

19 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate of the State of New Jersey:*

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21 1. This House urges Merriam-Webster, Inc. and the Oxford
22 University Press to include the word upstander in their dictionaries.

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24 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
25 shall be transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the Chief
26 Executive Officers of Merriam-Webster, Inc. and the Oxford
27 University Press.

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STATEMENT

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32 This resolution urges Merriam-Webster, Inc. and the Oxford
33 University Press to include the word upstander in dictionary.

34 In 2002, Samantha Power, a Pulitzer-Prize winning author, first
35 introduced the word upstander to describe a person in her book, *A
36 Problem from Hell: America & The Age of Genocide*, who defied
37 logic, risked their careers and lives, and spoke up on behalf of distant
38 victims. An upstander is an individual who chooses to take positive
39 action in the face of injustice in society or in situations in which
40 individuals need assistance.

41 An upstander is also a person who stands up to bullying, whether
42 at school, home, work, house of worship, or out with friends,
43 family, colleagues, or teammates. Superintendent Richard Labbe of
44 the Sayreville School District drew national attention to the word
45 upstander while addressing the locker room misconduct that led to
46 the shut down of the Sayreville High School football program.

47 Bullying incidents are more likely to occur in a school setting,
48 with nearly one in every three students disclosing that they have

1 been bullied at least once while attending school. Student
2 bystanders are often aware of bullying incidents before most adults
3 in a school setting, with 71 percent of students disclosing that they
4 have witnessed bullying at their respective schools. More than half
5 of bullying incidents can be stopped when a peer intervenes, on
6 behalf of the student being bullied, within ten seconds of the
7 incident happening.

8 Nonprofit organizations, such as Facing History and Ourselves,
9 an international educational and professional development
10 organization whose mission is to engage students of diverse
11 backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice, and
12 antisemitism in order to promote the development of a more
13 humane and informed society, and educational institutions have
14 utilized the word upstander in anti-bullying strategies to raise
15 awareness of the term and what it means to be an upstander.