SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 106

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 16, 2020

Sponsored by:
Senator JOSEPH F. VITALE
District 19 (Middlesex)
Senator VIN GOPAL
District 11 (Monmouth)

SYNOPSIS

Urges Governor to develop strategies reducing children's exposure to adverse childhood experiences.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION urging the Governor to develop strategies to reduce children's exposure to adverse childhood experiences.

WHEREAS, Research over the last two decades in the evolving fields of neuroscience, molecular biology, public health, genomics, and epigenetics reveals that adverse childhood experiences in the first few years of a child's life build changes into the biology of the human body that influence physical and mental health throughout a child's life; and

WHEREAS, Adverse childhood experiences are traumatic experiences that occur during childhood; and

WHEREAS, These adverse experiences include physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, physical and emotional neglect, household dysfunction, substance use disorder, untreated mental illness or incarceration of a household member, or domestic violence, separation, or divorce involving a family member; and

WHEREAS, Strong, frequent, or prolonged stress caused by adverse childhood experiences can become toxic stress, impacting the development of a child's fundamental brain architecture and stress response systems; and

WHEREAS, Changes to a child's fundamental brain architecture and stress response systems cause health problems in adulthood that are the lead to the most common causes of death and disability in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Neurobiological, epigenetics, and psychological studies have shown that traumatic experiences in childhood and adolescence can diminish concentration, memory, organizational, and language abilities, thereby negatively impacting a student's academic performance, classroom behavior, and ability to form relationships; and

WHEREAS, The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE Study) is a research study conducted by Kaiser Permanente and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and

WHEREAS, The ACE Study, which surveyed approximately 17,000 participants, demonstrated an association of adverse childhood experiences with health and social problems as adults; and

WHEREAS, According to the study, two-thirds of the participants had at least one adverse childhood experience, and one in six of the participants had four or more adverse experiences; and

WHEREAS, The ACE Study found that a person with four or more adverse childhood experiences was two times more likely to have a stroke, ischemic heart disease, or chronic pulmonary obstructive disease, and are at a high risk of developing cancer and diabetes; and

WHEREAS, According to the study's findings, adverse childhood experiences can affect a child's future contact with the criminal justice system. Women and men who have undergone adverse

childhood experiences are at a higher risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of intimate partner violence than those who have not suffered such adverse experiences; and

WHEREAS, The study also found that a person with four or more adverse childhood experiences was 12 times more likely to attempt suicide, 10 times more likely to use drugs, seven times more likely to be an alcoholic, and 46 times more likely to have learning or emotional problems; and

WHEREAS, The emerging science and research on toxic stress and adverse childhood experiences evidence a growing public health crisis with implications for educational, juvenile justice, criminal justice, and health care systems; and

WHEREAS, Early childhood offers a unique window of opportunity to prevent and heal the impact of adverse childhood experiences and toxic stress on a child's body and brain; and

WHEREAS, Positively influencing the architecture of a child's developing brain and reducing children's exposure to adverse childhood experiences is more effective and less costly than attempting to correct poor learning, health, and behaviors later in life; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED *by the Senate of the State of New Jersey (the General Assembly concurring):*

1. The Legislature of the State of New Jersey respectfully urges the Governor to develop strategies to reduce children's exposure to adverse childhood experiences, address the impact of such experiences on a child's brain and body, and invest in preventive health care and other educational, social, and mental health interventions that will positively affect the lives of New Jersey's children and their families.

2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly or the Secretary of the Senate to the Governor and Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey.

STATEMENT

This concurrent resolution respectfully urges the Governor to develop strategies to reduce children's exposure to adverse childhood experiences, address the impact of such experiences on a child's brain and body, and invest in preventive health care and other educational, social, mental health interventions that will positively affect the lives of New Jersey's children and their families.