SENATE RESOLUTION

8669

By Senators Pedersen, Litzow, Liias, Fain, Ranker, Nelson, Jayapal, Billig, Warnick, Dansel, Hill, Darneille, Rolfes, King, Rivers, Kohl-Welles, Mullet, Frockt, Conway, Cleveland, Becker, Fraser, McCoy, Hobbs, Hasegawa, Chase, Roach, McAuliffe, Hatfield, Keiser, and Habib

WHEREAS, On the National Day of Silence, many students take a vow of silence to bring attention to the name calling, bullying, and harassment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth in schools; and

WHEREAS, The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network designates the third Friday of every April as the National Day of Silence; and

WHEREAS, Hundreds of thousands of students at more than 8,000 schools have participated in the National Day of Silence in past years; and

WHEREAS, The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network's 2013 National School Climate Survey illustrated the pervasive harassment and victimization faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students by documenting their experiences within the preceding academic year; and

WHEREAS, Nearly 75 percent of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students reported being verbally harassed by their peers at school because of their sexual orientation, and more than 55 percent reported being verbally harassed because of their gender expression; and

WHEREAS, 36 percent of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students reported being physically harassed by their peers at school because of their sexual orientation, and over 20 percent reported being physically harassed because of their gender expression; and

WHEREAS, Over 15 percent of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students reported being physically assaulted by their peers at school because of their sexual orientation, and more than 10 percent reported being physically assaulted because of their gender expression; and

WHEREAS, Nearly 60 percent of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students reported that they felt unsafe in school, and nearly 30 percent reported missing at least one entire school day in the preceding month because of safety concerns; and

WHEREAS, Transgender students were more likely than all other students to report feeling unsafe at school because of their gender expression; and

WHEREAS, According to the National Transgender Discrimination Survey, those who expressed a transgender identity or gender nonconformity while in grades K through 12 reported alarming rates of harassment, physical assault, and sexual violence so severe that almost 15 percent of those surveyed had to leave school; and

WHEREAS, Harassment because of sexual orientation or gender expression has an impact on student academic performance, such that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students who experienced high levels of verbal harassment because of their sexual orientation or gender expression reported a grade point average nearly one-half grade lower than that of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students who experienced low levels of such harassment; and

WHEREAS, The presence of supportive staff contributed to a range of positive survey indicators, including fewer reports of missing school, fewer reports of feeling unsafe, greater academic achievement, higher educational aspirations, and a greater sense of school belonging; and

WHEREAS, The State of Washington has enacted a series of laws to require school districts to prevent bullying, harassment, and discrimination against students on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity or expression; and

WHEREAS, Every child should be guaranteed an education free from name calling, bullying, harassment, and discrimination, regardless of his or her sexual orientation and gender identity or expression;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate support the goals of the National Day of Silence, applaud the young people who support their peers who have experienced bullying and harassment by participating in the National Day of Silence, and encourage schools and school districts around the state to adopt and enforce policies that ensure a safe and healthy learning environment for all students, teachers, and other staff regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

I, Hunter G. Goodman, Secretary of the Senate,

do hereby certify that this is a true and

correct copy of Senate Resolution 8669,

adopted by the Senate

April 17, 2015

HUNTER G. GOODMAN

Secretary of the Senate