
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 126 Session of
2021

INTRODUCED BY KIRKLAND, SANCHEZ, BURNS, KENYATTA, FREEMAN,
KINSEY, McNEILL, GALLOWAY, SCHLOSSBERG, SCHMITT, HANBIDGE,
NEILSON, MERSKI, HILL-EVANS, CIRESI, SCHWEYER, HOHENSTEIN,
BOBACK, HOWARD AND LEE, JULY 30, 2021

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH, JULY 30, 2021

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing emotional abuse of children and its deleterious
2 effect on all individuals in this Commonwealth.

3 WHEREAS, Dorota Iwaniec, Ph.D, has described emotional abuse
4 as "a persistent, chronic pattern of parental behaviour...which
5 over the years becomes internalised and gives rise to the
6 feeling that the child alone is to blame"; and

7 WHEREAS, Emotional abuse of children takes many forms and may
8 include rejection, isolation, terrorization, intentional lack of
9 acknowledgment, corruption, verbal assault and overpressure to
10 follow a parent's or guardian's demands; and

11 WHEREAS, Childhood emotional abuse can occur in unexpected
12 environments, perpetrated in homes, foster homes and group homes
13 as well as secure care and criminal justice facilities; and

14 WHEREAS, Approximately 3 million children in the United
15 States experience some form of maltreatment each year, while
16 research shows that nearly one in four of those children
17 experience psychological or emotional abuse exclusively; and

1 WHEREAS, This figure may not reflect the full scope of the
2 problem as childhood emotional abuse can be difficult to detect,
3 define and measure, especially across generations; and

4 WHEREAS, Research published in 2001 estimated that
5 psychological maltreatment may have been significantly present
6 in the childhood histories of more than one-third of the general
7 adult population of the United States; and

8 WHEREAS, As a public health issue, childhood emotional abuse
9 bears personal and societal costs; and

10 WHEREAS, Victim advocate organizations consider the lasting
11 effects of emotional abuse, especially childhood emotional
12 abuse, to be the "most damaging form of maltreatment"; and

13 WHEREAS, Survivors may experience lifelong patterns of
14 depression, estrangement, anxiety, low self-esteem,
15 inappropriate or troubled relationships or lack of empathy, and
16 the societal costs are great; and

17 WHEREAS, The economic impact of child abuse and neglect is an
18 estimated \$80.3 billion per year, with \$33.3 billion in direct
19 costs for hospitalization, mental health care and law
20 enforcement, and \$46.9 billion in indirect costs for special
21 education, adult homelessness, criminal justice services and
22 lost work productivity; and

23 WHEREAS, It is important to enact legislation that raises
24 awareness of childhood emotional abuse, makes detection easier,
25 facilitates home visiting and parent mutual support self-help
26 groups and provides proactive mental health services for victims
27 and abusers; and

28 WHEREAS, This type of legislation would break parents and
29 guardians, children and society from the intergenerational cycle
30 of abuse and create a healthier, safer future for Pennsylvania;

1 therefore be it

2 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize
3 emotional abuse of children and its deleterious effect on all
4 individuals in this Commonwealth.