

## Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 73

### RESOLUTION CHAPTER 87

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 73—Relative to school districts.

[Filed with Secretary of State August 24, 2012.]

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 73, Yee. School districts: child sexual abuse curriculum.

This measure would declare that the Legislature encourages school districts to include age-appropriate instruction related to child sexual abuse in their curriculum in order to help pupils understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate conduct in situations where child sexual abuse could occur, and to provide pupils with resources on how to handle these potentially dangerous situations.

WHEREAS, Child sexual abuse has become the subject of great community concern and the focus of many legislative and professional initiatives, as evidenced by the expanding body of literature on sexual abuse, public declarations by adult survivors, and increased media coverage of sexual abuse issues; and

WHEREAS, Child sexual abuse has been reported up to 80,000 times a year, but the number of unreported instances is far greater because the children are afraid to tell anyone what has happened, and the legal procedure for validating an episode is difficult; and

WHEREAS, Child sexual abuse can take place within the home, by a parent, stepparent, sibling, or other relative, as well as outside of the home by a friend, neighbor, child care person, teacher, or stranger; and

WHEREAS, A child five years of age or older who knows and cares for the abuser often becomes trapped between affection or loyalty towards the abuser and the sense that the sexual activities are terribly wrong. If the child attempts to break away from the sexual relationship, the abuser may threaten the child with violence or loss of love, and when the sexual abuse occurs within the family, the child may fear anger, jealousy, the shame of other family members, or that the family will break up if the secret is told; and

WHEREAS, The first indicators of sexual abuse may not be physical, but rather behavioral changes or abnormalities. Often there are no obvious external signs of child sexual abuse, and many signs can only be detected through a physical examination by a physician; and

WHEREAS, A child is not psychologically prepared to cope with repeated sexual stimulation, and can develop a variety of distressing feelings, thoughts, and behaviors resulting from the inability to cope with the overstimulation; and

WHEREAS, The effects of sexual abuse extend far beyond childhood, since a child who is the victim of prolonged sexual abuse usually develops low self-esteem and a feeling of worthlessness, and may become withdrawn and mistrustful of adults; and

WHEREAS, Many sexually abused children have difficulty relating to others except on sexual terms, may themselves become child abusers or have other serious problems when they reach adulthood, and often develop an abnormal or distorted view of sex that can lead to difficulty with intimate relationships later in life; and

WHEREAS, If childhood sexual abuse is not treated, long-term symptoms can continue through adulthood, including, but not limited to, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression and thoughts of suicide, sexual anxiety and disorders, low self-esteem, and unhealthy behaviors such as alcohol, drug, self-harm, or eating problems; and

WHEREAS, Sexually abused children and their families need immediate professional evaluation and treatment in order to help the abused children regain a sense of self-esteem, cope with feelings of guilt about the abuse, and begin the process of overcoming the trauma; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring,* That the Legislature hereby encourages school districts to include age-appropriate instruction related to child sexual abuse in their curriculum in order to help pupils understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate conduct in situations where child sexual abuse could occur, and to provide pupils with resources on how to handle these potentially dangerous situations; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.