

Rep. Rutledge offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 57.

A resolution to declare April 17, 2015, as a Day of Silence in the state of Michigan.

Whereas, the National Day of Silence is a day in which students take a vow of silence to bring attention to the anti- lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender name-calling, bullying, and harassment faced by individuals 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 illustrates 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 because of their gender expression; and

Whereas, Over 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 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 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, Student academic performance is affected such that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students who experienced high levels of verbal harassment because of their sexual orientation or gender expression report a grade point average nearly a half grade lower than those 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 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, A growing number of cities and local education authorities in the state of Michigan are adopting laws and policies to prohibit name-calling, 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 by the House of Representatives, That the members of this legislative body declare April 17, 2015, as a Day of Silence in the state of Michigan. We support the ideals of supports the goals and ideals of the National Day of Silence, request that the Governor issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe the National Day of Silence with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities, and encourage city and local education authorities in the state of Michigan to adopt laws and policies to prohibit name-calling, bullying, harassment, and discrimination against students, teachers, and other school staff regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity or expression, so that the nation's schools are institutions where all individuals are able to focus on learning.