

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 7—Senators Wiener, Care,

McGinness, Porter, Titus and Washington

FILE NUMBER.....

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION—Commending the Board of County Commissioners of Clark County and its Neighborhood Justice Center for the success of the Peer Mediation Program.

WHEREAS, All pupils, teachers and other school staff deserve a learning and working environment that is safe and free from unacceptable behavior by pupils, including violence and other activity that is disruptive of the academic process; and

WHEREAS, During one 12-month period in 1997-1998, this Nation was shocked when children opened fire on school grounds resulting in the tragic loss of lives and needless injury in Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Oregon and Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, The public schools in this state are increasingly reporting incidents of violence and other unacceptable behavior by pupils on school grounds, including violence against staff and other pupils and the possession of dangerous weapons; and

WHEREAS, In 1991 the Board of County Commissioners of Clark County established a Neighborhood Justice Center within its Department of Social Services to assist residents of Clark County in resolving conflicts by providing a forum for the impartial mediation of disputes and offering referrals to appropriate services; and

WHEREAS, In 1992, the Neighborhood Justice Center began its Peer Mediation Program, which is a form of alternative dispute resolution that uses specially chosen pupils who are trained in mediation skills to facilitate communication among pupils who are involved in a dispute and help the pupils reach a solution to the dispute that is mutually acceptable; and

WHEREAS, In 1992, the Peer Mediation Program was offered in 2 schools of the Clark County School District and has since been expanded into 57 schools; and

WHEREAS, Since the inception of the Peer Mediation Program, 7,660 disputes have gone through peer mediation, with a 90 percent rate of success at resolving conflicts; and

WHEREAS, The Peer Mediation Program teaches pupils valuable life skills, including communication skills, critical thinking skills and problem-solving skills which pupils can use not only in the school setting but at home and in the community; and

WHEREAS, When children resolve their own conflicts without resorting to violence they learn to take responsibility for their own actions as well as gain confidence in their ability to help themselves; and

WHEREAS, In recent years, many other schools throughout the Nation have also developed peer mediation programs to assist pupils in resolving conflicts without resorting to violence, including schools in Mississippi, Arkansas, Kentucky, New York, Oregon and California; and

WHEREAS, With the success of the Peer Mediation Program in resolving conflicts at school in a manner that is peaceable and mutually acceptable, both pupils and educational personnel can concentrate on the importance of academics free from the worry that disruptive acts of violence may occur on school grounds at any time; and

WHEREAS, The Neighborhood Justice Center also offers the Culture of Peace Program, which is deigned to teach juveniles and adults how to reduce prejudice and resolve conflicts; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, THE ASSEMBLY CONCURRING, That the members of the 70th session of the Nevada Legislature commend the Board of County Commissioners of Clark County and its Neighborhood Justice Center for their dedication to the success of the Peer Mediation Program; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of the Senate prepare and transmit a copy of this resolution to the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners of Clark County and to the Clark County Social Service Neighborhood Justice Center.