

Bipartisan Bill Targets Hazing on College Campuses

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Press Release

Meehan, Fudge introduce Report and Educate About Campus Hazing (REACH) Act

WASHINGTON – Congressman Patrick Meehan (R-Pa.) and Congresswoman Marcia Fudge (D-Oh.) Thursday introduced the Report and Educate About Campus Hazing (REACH) Act, bipartisan legislation that takes on the challenge of hazing on our college campuses by requiring incidents of hazing to be reported as part of a college’s annual crime report.

The University of Maine conducted the National Study on Hazing in 2008. They sampled 11,000 college students and found that 55% of students experienced some form of hazing, yet of those, 95% never reported hazing to school officials or authorities.

“Each year, college students across the country are subjected to dangerous incidents of hazing, the tragic death of Penn State student Timothy Piazza being just the latest example,” **said Rep.**

Meehan. The first step in combating this problem is understanding just how prevalent it is on campuses. By requiring colleges and universities to report hazing as part of their annual crime reports, we can both better understand the extent of the problem, and encourage administrators to partner with students to reduce risky behavior.”

“Hazing is a persistent and dangerous problem on campuses around the country that will only be solved if we become more proactive,” **said Rep. Fudge.** “We cannot act only after an unfortunate incident occurs. We need a strategy that will address hazing at its core. Accurate college reporting will provide the data we need to develop legislative solutions for administrators and faculty and protect our nation’s college students.”

“We are very pleased that Congressman Meehan and Congresswoman Fudge have introduced this important legislation,” **said Gary and Julie DeVercelly, whose son Gary Jr. died in a 2007 hazing incident at Rider University.** “We have been fighting for this since our son, Gary Jr. died as a result of hazing a little over 10 years ago. For too long, too many sons and daughters have been harmed or have died from hazing. Through accountability, transparency, and education, this bill will transform the hazing culture,” **Mr. and Mrs. DeVercelly continued.** “We know that this will save lives and make college campuses safer!”

The legislation is also supported by Pennsylvania State University.

“The University community continues to mourn the loss of Timothy Piazza and our thoughts remain with his family and friends. Penn State supports the REACH Act and greatly appreciates Congressman Meehan’s and Congresswoman Fudge’s leadership on this important national issue. Our support for this legislation aligns with our commitment to implement significant reforms as a leader in ensuring the safety and well-being of our students, and of the entire University community,” **said Penn State President Eric J. Barron.**

“The Clery Act provides a framework for colleges and universities to report and disclose policy statements and crime statistics,” **said Allison Kiss, Executive Director of the Clery Center for Security on Campus.** “It also requires education on certain crimes to students and employees. The inclusion of hazing in the Clery Act is overdue and will include a clear definitions and guidelines for campuses and contribute to improved safety.”

The legislation has also received praise from Greek life organizations.

“Research shows hazing prevention is best accomplished through comprehensive measures, including proactive education, transparency, and accountability around standards,” **said Judson Horras, President and CEO of the North-American Interfraternity Conference** “The North-American Interfraternity Conference backs the REACH Act because it focuses on these critical strategies. NIC

member fraternities stand united in providing positive, hazing-free, meaningful rites of passage that strengthen and develop young men, and we commend co-sponsors Reps. Meehan and Fudge for their leadership in facing this problem.”

Dani Weatherford, executive director of the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC), on behalf of the NPC Board of Directors, issued the following statement applauding new anti-hazing legislation introduced today by Rep. Patrick Meehan:

“The members of the National Panhellenic Conference support the Report and Educate about Campus Hazing (REACH) Act of 2017,” **Weatherford said**. “Students have long had access to accurate and timely information about security issues on campus, and they deserve the same transparency about incidents of hazing. No single piece of legislation can eradicate hazing on campus, but it can ensure that students, administrators, and parents have access to the tools and information they need to hold organizations and campuses accountable. We stand with elected leaders, campus officials and students nationwide as committed partners in this fight.”

The REACH Act would **add hazing as one of the misconducts/crimes that are reported under the Clery Act**. Specifically, it requires colleges and universities that participate in federal financial aid programs (and therefore are subject to the Clery Act) to:

- Disclose incidents of hazing in their Annual Security Report;
- Report statistics of referrals for discipline and arrests specific to hazing; and
- Implement a hazing education program for students.

The bill also **defines hazing** as:

Any intentional, knowing or reckless act committed by a student, or a former student, whether individually or in concert with other persons, against another student, and in which both of the following apply:

(a) The act was committed in connection with an initiation into, an affiliation with or the maintenance of membership in any organization that is affiliated with such educational institution.

(b) The act contributes to a substantial risk of potential physical injury, mental harm or degradation or causes physical injury, mental harm or personal degradation