

R029-0506

10 **A RESOLUTION CONCERNING**
20 **ZERO TOLERANCE RULES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

30 **WHEREAS:** Many public schools have strict rules regarding the presence of drugs and weapons on
40 school grounds; and,

50 **WHEREAS:** These rules, often called zero tolerance rules, result in harsh punishments, including
60 expulsion, even for first time offenders; and,

70 **WHEREAS:** While these rules are in place in order to send the message that drugs and weapons in
80 school are not tolerated, such rules can result in good students receiving very severe
90 punishments for making a single mistake; and,

100 **WHEREAS:** In 2005, a 12-year-old student in Texas accidentally left a pocketknife in his coat that he
110 brought to school and was turned in to school authorities after consulting a friend; and,

120 **WHEREAS:** This student, a Boy Scout and youth leader at a church, was suspended from school for
130 45 days and enrolled in an alternative school for juvenile offenders; and,

140 **WHEREAS:** In 1999, a 13-year-old Arizona student was suspended under the zero tolerance rules for
150 bring a model rocket to school because it was considered a weapon; and,

160 **WHEREAS:** Students have also been suspended from schools for bringing in items such as Tylenol,
170 Mydol, cough drops, and mouthwash; and,

180 **WHEREAS:** These policies can impact a student by placing a mark on his or her record that may
190 prevent the student from getting into the college of his or her choice; and,

200 **WHEREAS:** These policies can also harm the self-worth good students by putting them in the same
210 category as true juvenile criminals; and,

220 **WHEREAS:** Students impacted by zero tolerance policies may also fall behind due to missing classes
230 for an extended period of time.

240 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Maryland Student Legislature urges the state's school
250 districts to examine their disciplinary policies and appropriately modify any zero
260 tolerance policies, especially those that severely punish students for accidentally bringing
270 minor weapons to school or using common over the counter medicines; and,

280 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Maryland Student Legislature urges the Maryland General
290 Assembly to pass any appropriate legislation protecting the state's students from
300 excessively harsh punishments stemming from zero tolerance policies.

310 **MANDATES:** Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools
320 Robert L. Ehrlich, Governor of Maryland
330 Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate
340 Mike E. Busch, Speaker of the House of Delegates

SPONSOR:

Ryan Walden, University of Maryland, Baltimore County