

By: J. Davis of Harris

H.R. No. 561

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The observance of Mental Illness Awareness Day on
2 February 28, 2013, brings much-needed attention to a serious and
3 often misunderstood issue that affects the lives of millions of
4 Texans; and

5 WHEREAS, An estimated one in four American adults suffers
6 from a mental disorder in a given year, and 11 percent of children
7 and adolescents have a mental health condition that causes severe
8 functional impairment; and

9 WHEREAS, Depressive disorders are the leading cause of
10 disability worldwide and are associated with a significant risk of
11 suicide; among 15- to 24-year-olds, suicide accounts for 12 percent
12 of all deaths, more than eight times the rate for the U.S.
13 population as a whole; and

14 WHEREAS, The effects of mental illness on veterans are a
15 growing cause for concern, with an estimated 22 committing suicide
16 every day; of the 2.4 million who have served in Iraq and
17 Afghanistan, more than 200,000 have been formally diagnosed with
18 post-traumatic stress disorder, and experts believe that many more
19 could be affected because of inadequacies in screening and
20 diagnosis; rates of PTSD are considered to be even higher among
21 Vietnam War veterans, with 30 percent of men and 27 percent of women
22 experiencing it at some point in their lifetimes; and

23 WHEREAS, The stigma associated with mental illness can result
24 in discrimination and bullying along with damaging effects on

1 relationships with loved ones; although mentally ill individuals
2 are far more likely to be victims of violence than perpetrators,
3 there is a widespread perception that persons living with mental
4 health conditions pose a threat to others; and

5 WHEREAS, In spite of its prevalence and debilitating effects,
6 mental illness often goes undiagnosed and untreated; roughly half
7 of all people experiencing homelessness have mental health issues,
8 and nearly eight times more Texans with serious mental illness are
9 in jails and prisons than in hospitals, in contrast to the national
10 rate of three to one; the availability of resources has further
11 declined during the past three years, as states have lost some \$4
12 billion in mental health funding due to budget cuts brought on by
13 the economic downturn; and

14 WHEREAS, Today, thanks to new discoveries in genetics, modern
15 brain research, and psychiatry, mental illness is no longer the
16 frightening mystery that it once was; advances in medical science
17 have revealed that serious mental disorders have a biological basis
18 similar to physical illnesses like heart disease and diabetes;
19 moreover, like the heart, the human brain is a vital organ whose
20 illnesses can be successfully treated; and

21 WHEREAS, Sophisticated medicines can greatly ease the
22 suffering of patients with mental illness and help many return to
23 normal, productive, and rewarding lives; studies have shown that
24 aiding the mentally ill can also have a positive effect on the
25 economy, with a potential return of \$23 for every \$1 spent on mental
26 health services in Texas; and

27 WHEREAS, Such organizations as Mental Health America of

1 Texas, the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Texas, the
2 Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, and the Federation of
3 Texas Psychiatry work to improve the quality of life of persons with
4 mental illness by promoting treatment and prevention, eliminating
5 stigma, increasing housing opportunities, and advancing smart
6 investment in mental health services; the dedicated efforts of
7 these groups and other advocates across the state help to ensure
8 that all Texans have access to humane and effective mental health
9 care, and in so doing, they stand to greatly benefit our society as
10 a whole; now, therefore, be it

11 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 83rd Texas
12 Legislature hereby recognize February 28, 2013, as Mental Illness
13 Awareness Day at the State Capitol and encourage all Texans to learn
14 more about this important health matter.