

By: King of Taylor

H.R. No. 529

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The observance of Mental Illness Awareness Day on
2 February 19, 2015, 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 one-fifth of young
7 people ages 13 to 18 experience a mental health condition that
8 causes severe functional impairment; the most common form of mental
9 illness is anxiety disorders, which are believed to affect 18
10 percent of the adult population; and

11 WHEREAS, Major depression, which affects 6.7 percent of
12 adults, is a leading cause of disability worldwide and is
13 associated with a significant risk of suicide; in the
14 15-to-24-year-old age group, suicide accounts for 20 percent of all
15 deaths annually, and over 90 percent of those who die by suicide had
16 one or more mental disorders; and

17 WHEREAS, The impact of mental illness on military veterans is
18 a growing cause for concern; among service members who have been
19 deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan, one in five has been formally
20 diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, and experts believe
21 that many more could be affected because of inadequacies in
22 screening and diagnosis; a particularly worrying trend is the high
23 suicide rate of veterans relative to the general population, with
24 an estimated 22 committing suicide every day; and

1 WHEREAS, For some, the stigma associated with mental illness
2 can result in discrimination and bullying and take a damaging toll
3 on relationships with loved ones; although mentally ill individuals
4 are far more likely to be victims of violence than perpetrators,
5 there is a widespread perception that persons living with mental
6 health conditions pose a threat to others; and

7 WHEREAS, In spite of its prevalence and debilitating effects,
8 mental illness often goes undiagnosed and untreated; roughly half
9 of all people experiencing homelessness have severe mental health
10 or substance abuse issues, and far more Texans with serious mental
11 illness are in jails and prisons than in hospitals; and

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

19 WHEREAS, Sophisticated medicines can greatly ease the
20 suffering of patients with mental illness and help many return to
21 normal, productive, and rewarding lives; according to a 2009
22 report, increased mental health expenditures could also be a strong
23 economic stimulus, with a potential return of \$23 for every \$1 spent
24 on mental health services in Texas; and

25 WHEREAS, Agencies and organizations across the state and
26 nation are committed to improving the quality of life of persons
27 with mental illness by promoting treatment and prevention,

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1 eliminating stigma, increasing housing opportunities, and
2 advancing smart investment in mental health services; Mental
3 Illness Awareness Day provides an opportunity to acknowledge the
4 commendable efforts of these groups to ensure that effective mental
5 health care is available for every Texan in need; now, therefore, be
6 it

7 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 84th Texas
8 Legislature hereby recognize February 19, 2015, as Mental Illness
9 Awareness Day at the State Capitol and encourage all Texans to learn
10 more about this important health matter.