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By:  Hunter H.R. No. 2110

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, Suicide is a complex and multifaceted problem, and its increasing incidence among certain vulnerable groups, including youth and veterans, has become an urgent health care priority; and

WHEREAS, According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the national suicide rate for teenagers has nearly tripled since the 1940s; the rate in Texas is nearly double the national average, and suicide is the second leading cause of death among Texans aged 15 to 34; and

WHEREAS, Further compounding the problem, many schools across the state have student-to-counselor ratios that greatly exceed the recommendations of the Texas Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs adopted by the State Board of Education; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that more than 20 veterans commit suicide every day in the United States, a rate 1.5 times higher than that of the general population; veterans compose 14 percent of all suicide deaths, despite representing only 8 percent of the national population; and

WHEREAS, In Texas, the suicide rate among veterans is more than twice that of the state's overall population, and the risk is more pronounced for those who served in recent conflicts, such as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; suicide among veterans aged 18-34 rose by 10 percent between 2006 and 2016, translating to 45 deaths for every 100,000 veterans, the largest increase for any age group; and

WHEREAS, Many factors impact veterans' mental health and well-being, including family and employment issues and the challenge of reintegrating into civilian society; those men and women who have served our country are in dire need of services to assist with life transitions and the stresses that can arise from them; and

WHEREAS, Mental health care for veterans is an area of particular need in our state, and a 2015 report by The University of Texas outlined the benefits of providing coordinated mental health services for Texas veterans; and

WHEREAS, In the Coastal Bend of Texas, students, teachers, counselors, administrators, veterans, and community advocates have joined together to study the causes and effects of suicide among veterans and adolescents in the state; the coalition conducted two public forums in the spring of 2019 to focus attention on these issues, and the discussions have resulted in recommendations brought forth for consideration during the 86th Texas Legislature; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 86th Texas Legislature hereby recognize the participants in the Coastal Bend forums for their efforts to address the tragic problem of suicide in the state and extend sincere appreciation to these caring individuals.