

105th CONGRESS
1st Session
H. RES. 212

Recognizing suicide as a national problem, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

July 31, 1997

Mr. Lewis of Georgia (for himself, Mr. Boehlert, Mr. Brown of Ohio, Mr. Berry, Mr. Capps, Ms. Christian-Green, Mr. Clement, Mr. Evans, Mr. Flake, Ms. Jackson-Lee of Texas, Mr. Matsui, Mrs. Meek of Florida, Ms. Norton, Mr. Payne, Mr. Ramstad, Mr. Rothman, Mr. Sanders, Ms. Slaughter, Mr. Tierney, Mr. Traficant, Mr. Vento, Mr. Wexler, and Mr. Wynn) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce

RESOLUTION

Recognizing suicide as a national problem, and for other purposes.

Whereas suicide, the ninth leading cause of all deaths in the United States and the third such cause for young persons ages 15 through 24, claims over 31,000 lives annually, more than homicide;

Whereas suicide attempts, estimated to exceed 750,000 annually, adversely impact the lives of millions of family members;

Whereas suicide completions annually cause over 200,000 family members to grieve over and mourn a tragic suicide death for the first time, thus creating a population of over 4,000,000 such mourners in the United States;

Whereas the suicide completion rate per 100,000 persons has remained relatively stable over the past 40 years for the general population, and that rate has nearly tripled for young persons;

Whereas the suicide rate is rising among African American young men;

Whereas the suicide completion rate is highest for adults over 65;

Whereas the stigma associated with mental illness works against suicide prevention by keeping persons at risk of completing suicide from seeking lifesaving help;

Whereas the stigma associated with suicide deaths seriously inhibits surviving family members from regaining meaningful lives;

Whereas suicide deaths impose a huge unrecognized and unmeasured economic burden on the United States in terms of potential years of life lost, medical costs incurred, and work time lost by mourners;

Whereas suicide is a complex, multifaceted biological, sociological, psychological, and societal problem;

Whereas even though many suicides are currently preventable, there is still a need for the development of more effective suicide prevention programs;

Whereas suicide prevention opportunities continue to increase due to advances in clinical research, in mental disorder treatments, and in basic neuroscience, and due to the development of community-based initiatives that await evaluation; and

Whereas suicide prevention efforts should be encouraged to the maximum extent possible: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives--

- (1) recognizes suicide as a national problem and declares suicide prevention to be a national priority;
- (2) acknowledges that no single suicide prevention program or effort will be appropriate for all populations or communities;
- (3) encourages initiatives dedicated to--
 - (A) preventing suicide;
 - (B) responding to people at risk for suicide and people who have attempted suicide;
 - (C) promoting safe and effective treatment for persons at risk for suicidal behavior;
 - (D) supporting people who have lost someone to suicide; and
 - (E) developing an effective national strategy for the prevention of suicide; and
- (4) encourages the development, and the promotion of accessibility and affordability, of mental health services, to enable all persons at risk for suicide to obtain the services, without fear of any stigma.

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