

Senate Resolution 546

By: Senators Ligon, Jr. of the 3rd, Brass of the 28th, Watson of the 1st, Robertson of the 29th and Kirkpatrick of the 32nd

A RESOLUTION

1 Encouraging local law enforcement agencies, psychiatric facilities, doctors, and therapists
2 to purchase and freely distribute Mental Health Alert Wristbands to those suffering from
3 mental illness; commending Ms. Dottie Bailey for developing the Mental Health Alert
4 Wristband; and for other purposes.

5 WHEREAS, administrated by the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in partnership with
6 the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, the Georgia
7 Association of Community Service Boards, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
8 Georgia, and other community partners, the Georgia Crisis Intervention Team works to
9 ensure that first responders are trained to properly identify and assist mentally ill citizens in
10 crisis; and

11 WHEREAS, since only 4,103 officers throughout Georgia have been trained in the Crisis
12 Intervention Team Program as of August 2019, it is essential that this program continues so
13 that all Georgia officers and first responders can be instructed on how to safely assist those
14 in crisis regardless of their mental health diagnosis; and

15 WHEREAS, on December 10, 2015, *USA Today* reported that Americans with mental
16 illnesses are 16 times more likely to be killed by law enforcement, stating that almost one in
17 four fatal police encounters involved someone with a mental illness; and

18 WHEREAS, the National Alliance on Mental Illness has reported that two million people
19 with mental illnesses are booked into jails each year, which accounts for nearly 15 percent
20 of incarcerated men and 30 percent of incarcerated women, most of whom are not violent
21 criminals and lack needed treatment, which often leads to repeated arrests; and

22 WHEREAS, a simple and effective aid to law enforcement officers and other first responders
23 is the Mental Health Alert Wristband, an inexpensive silicon band with a blue and silver

24 design developed by Glynn County's Dottie Bailey, a Crisis Intervention Team community
25 presenter and certified peer specialist; and

26 WHEREAS, as of September 2019, 6,200 wristbands have been purchased or donated; and

27 WHEREAS, the NAMI Golden Isles Chapter and NAMI's headquarters in Georgia strongly
28 support Ms. Bailey's efforts toward making the Mental Health Alert Wristbands more widely
29 available; the wristbands are already in use at many locations throughout Georgia and other
30 states, such as Maine, Montana, Oregon, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia; and

31 WHEREAS, the wristbands are a symbol of the bond between Crisis Intervention Team law
32 enforcement officers and the mental health communities they serve, and Crisis Intervention
33 Team officers are encouraged to wear the bands as a way for those with mental illnesses to
34 easily identify safe people to ask for assistance; and

35 WHEREAS, the Savannah Police Department is implementing a full-time Behavioral Health
36 Unit and has recognized the value of Mental Health Alert Wristbands as an immediate way
37 for citizens in need and officers to visually identify each other; and

38 WHEREAS, the mayor of Brunswick, Georgia, and the city's police and fire departments
39 have expressed how beneficial these wristbands are in emergency situations, allowing first
40 responders to quickly recognize someone who is in need of medical assistance rather than
41 a jail cell; and

42 WHEREAS, healthcare organizations that serve the mental health community are also
43 recognizing the tangible benefits the wristbands grant to patients.

44 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
45 encourage local law enforcement agencies, psychiatric facilities, doctors, and therapists to
46 purchase and freely distribute Mental Health Alert Wristbands to citizens who have mental
47 health disabilities to ensure their continued safety within their communities.

48 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of this body commend Ms. Dottie Bailey
49 for developing a simple, creative, and effective tool for helping those with mental illnesses
50 interact more positively with law enforcement officers and first responders.

51 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
52 to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the public and the
53 press.