

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 153

BY REPRESENTATIVE HENRY BURNS

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to pass the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2013.

WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, mental illness is defined as "health conditions that are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior (or some combination thereof) associated with distress and/or impaired function"; and

WHEREAS, approximately sixty-one million five hundred thousand Americans experience mental illness in a given year; and

WHEREAS, approximately thirteen million six hundred thousand Americans live with a serious mental illness such as schizophrenia, major depression, or bipolar disorder; and

WHEREAS, more than eleven million Americans have severe schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depression; and

WHEREAS, one-half of all chronic mental illness begins by the age of fourteen; and

WHEREAS, fewer than one-third of adults and one-half of children with a diagnosed mental disorder receive mental health services in a given year; and

WHEREAS, individuals living with mental health challenges and their families soon discover that the illness affects many aspects of their lives and that they need more than medical help; and

WHEREAS, many loved ones are left feeling hopeless in receiving effective and appropriate treatment for their family members who suffer from mental illness; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to better allocate current resources to focus on the most effective services and most severe mental illnesses; and

WHEREAS, it is prudent to promote stronger interagency coordination, increase data collection on treatment outcomes, and raise efforts to drive evidence-based care; and

WHEREAS, Congressman Tim Murphy of Pennsylvania has introduced the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2013 as H.R. 3717; and

WHEREAS, the bill will create within the Department of Health and Human Services a new assistant secretary for mental health and substance-abuse disorders who would lead federal mental illness efforts, be responsible for promoting the medically oriented models of care adopted by the National Institute of Mental Health, and oversee the grant process while holding community centers accountable by ensuring they are meeting evidence-based standards; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 3717 would push states to efficiently allocate funds towards modernizing mental illness state laws and raise support for community mental health centers and hospital psychiatric care; and

WHEREAS, to address issues regarding the shortage of psychiatric professionals, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2013 would advance medical tools like tele-psychiatry which links primary physicians in underserved areas to psychiatric professionals in order to decrease the average span of time between an initial episode of psychosis for a patient and his preliminary evaluation and treatment procedures; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 3717 would give physicians legal safe harbor to volunteer at understaffed mental health centers; and

WHEREAS, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2013 will adjust the federal privacy law known as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, by allowing mental health professionals and families to share information about loved ones to promote more appropriate and effective treatment procedures.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to pass the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2013.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE