

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1

By Reedy

A RESOLUTION to urge the United States Congress to enact legislation and request that the Veterans Administration work to expand and improve efforts to treat traumatic brain injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder.

WHEREAS, national veteran suicide crises data indicates that as many as twenty-two veterans commit suicide every day; and

WHEREAS, traumatic brain injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder can be causes of suicide; and

WHEREAS, data collected from 2000 to 2019 from Department of Defense numbers for Active, Guard, and Reserve members in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines indicate that for all severities of traumatic brain injuries, a total of 413,858 service members suffer from traumatic brain injuries; and

WHEREAS, the number of veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder varies by service era but ranges from approximately eleven percent to approximately thirty percent; and

WHEREAS, among the many societal costs of traumatic brain injury among the veteran population in Tennessee are the fiscal impacts, with lost sales tax revenue related to veterans suffering from traumatic brain injuries recently estimated at \$37,549,847 annually; and

WHEREAS, traumatic brain injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder both involve physical injury to brain tissue; and

WHEREAS, a tragically high number of veterans with traumatic brain injury and chronic pain have become victims of the opioid use disorder epidemic; and

WHEREAS, current standards of care approved for veterans for traumatic brain injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder focus on medication and counseling; and

WHEREAS, additional treatments, vocational counseling, and rehabilitation therapies exist that have been clinically proven to mitigate symptoms and improve recovery when used alone or integrated with counseling. Additional therapies to treat traumatic brain injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder include physical therapy, occupational therapy, cognitive therapy, speech therapy, and hyperbaric oxygen therapy; and

WHEREAS, hyperbaric oxygen therapy couples hyperbaric oxygen chamber treatment, which promotes oxygen for healing and restoring injured brain tissue, together with counseling; and

WHEREAS, access to a variety of treatments improves a veteran's opportunities for healing and recovery; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans' National Traumatic Injury Treatment Act (2023 H.R. 3649) would require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot program to furnish hyperbaric oxygen therapy to veterans suffering from traumatic brain injury or post-traumatic stress disorder; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we strongly urge the United States Congress to swiftly enact legislation to provide for veterans' access to treatments for traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder that include hyperbaric oxygen therapy, such as the Veterans' National Traumatic Injury Treatment Act, and any other legislation improving or authorizing access to other important therapies and counseling, and legislation fostering research and development of additional therapies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Speaker and the Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, the President and the

Secretary of the United States Senate, and each member of the Tennessee Congressional delegation.