

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 91

By White

A RESOLUTION expressing support for the Crisis Recovery Network coordinated by the Southern Regional Education Board and the participation of the State of Tennessee, recognizing the Network as a trusted support for Tennessee schools, districts, and postsecondary institutions to call upon if the need arises.

WHEREAS, after natural disasters like hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods and after school shootings and in public emergencies, recovery must be prioritized as a long-term process, rather than an immediate response only; and

WHEREAS, states, districts, and postsecondary institutions have focused on crisis prevention and management, but may not have the capacity to provide sustained support for their students, teachers, communities, and even their own counselors during the recovery stage; and

WHEREAS, rural districts and institutions in particular tend to have fewer counselors and limited access to additional counseling resources; and

WHEREAS, school counselors are often expected to respond to student needs after tragedy, even as they themselves grapple with the emotional toll, underscoring the need for external support for the entire school community; and

WHEREAS, schools and institutions affected by crisis may require at least a year of dedicated support to fully recover; and

WHEREAS, recovery efforts can strain resources that are already stretched thin, given that a National Center for Education Statistics study showed that less than half of public schools surveyed believe that their school is able to provide mental health services to all students in need; and

WHEREAS, recovery is an extended healing process for students and adults alike, and having additional counselors come to the aid of a school or institution in extreme need supports the healing process of all people in the community, including teachers and counselors at that school; and

WHEREAS, specialized training for counselors is essential to ensure that they have psychological first aid training and provide counseling that aligns with the unique needs of an educational environment; and

WHEREAS, research shows that students who receive adequate support after a crisis are more likely to succeed academically, remain in school, and contribute positively to society; and

WHEREAS, the Southern Regional Education Board, with its seventy-five-year history of partnering with states to improve education, is uniquely equipped to lead this effort because of its ability to mobilize key education and policymaking stakeholders at all levels; 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 to meet the urgent need for a coordinated, region-wide effort to provide consistent long-term counseling capacity that is ready to deploy immediately after a crisis is managed, we support the SREB Crisis Recovery Support Network.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we recognize that the Southern Regional Education Board, in close collaboration with governors' offices, state education agencies, local districts, and postsecondary institutions, will complement existing school and district crisis management efforts by focusing on long-term healing and psychological resilience and by deploying counselors with specialized training to schools in extreme need.