

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 761

Expressing support for the designation of the month of June 2024 as “National Post-Traumatic Stress Awareness Month” and June 27, 2024, as “National Post-Traumatic Stress Awareness Day”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 10, 2024

Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. CRAMER, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. HOEVEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. VANCE, Mr. KAINE, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. KELLY, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. PADILLA) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Expressing support for the designation of the month of June 2024 as “National Post-Traumatic Stress Awareness Month” and June 27, 2024, as “National Post-Traumatic Stress Awareness Day”.

Whereas the brave men and women of the Armed Forces, who proudly serve the United States, risk their lives to protect the freedom, health, and welfare of the people of the United States, and deserve the investment of every possible resource to ensure their lasting physical, mental, and emotional well-being;

Whereas nearly 2,800,000 members of the Armed Forces have deployed overseas since the events of September 11,

2001, and have served in places such as Afghanistan and Iraq;

Whereas the current generation of men and women in the Armed Forces has sustained a high rate of operational deployments, with many members of the Armed Forces serving overseas multiple times, placing those members at high risk of enduring traumatic combat stress;

Whereas, when left untreated, exposure to traumatic combat stress can lead to severe and chronic post-traumatic stress responses, commonly referred to as post-traumatic stress disorder (referred to in this preamble as “PTSD”) or post-traumatic stress injury;

Whereas many men and women of the Armed Forces and veterans who served before September 11, 2001, live with mental health needs from post-traumatic stress and remain at risk;

Whereas the Secretary of Veterans Affairs reports that approximately—

(1) 11 to 20 percent of veterans who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom have PTSD in a given year;

(2) 12 percent of veterans who served in the Persian Gulf war have PTSD in a given year; and

(3) 30 percent of veterans who served in the Vietnam era have had PTSD in their lifetimes;

Whereas the diagnosis known as PTSD was initially formulated in 1980 by the American Psychiatric Association to describe and categorize the symptoms and behavioral complications of severe traumatic stress;

Whereas the symptoms and behavioral complications of severe traumatic stress have historically been unjustly portrayed

in the media, stigmatizing individuals living with post traumatic stress;

Whereas electro-magnetic imaging has shown that severe traumatic stress causes physical changes in the brain;

Whereas many post-traumatic stress responses remain unreported, undiagnosed, and untreated due to—

(1) a lack of awareness about post-traumatic stress and the persistent stigma associated with mental health conditions; and

(2) a lack of access to mental health treatment;

Whereas, without timely redress, traumatic stress responses can worsen over time and lead to severe consequences, including self-harm;

Whereas exposure to trauma during service in the Armed Forces can lead to post-traumatic stress;

Whereas post-traumatic stress significantly increases the risk of anxiety, depression, homelessness, substance abuse, and suicide, especially if left untreated;

Whereas public perceptions of post-traumatic stress have created challenges for veterans seeking employment;

Whereas the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and veterans service organizations, as well as the larger medical community, both private and public, have made significant advances in the identification, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of post-traumatic stress and the symptoms of post-traumatic stress, but many challenges remain;

Whereas increased understanding of post-traumatic stress can help to eliminate the stigma attached to the mental health issues of post-traumatic stress;

Whereas additional efforts are needed to find further ways to eliminate the stigma associated with post-traumatic stress, including the recognition that post-traumatic stress is often a reparable injury, and examination of how post-traumatic stress is portrayed by the media;

Whereas timely and appropriate treatment of post-traumatic stress responses can diminish complications and prevent suicides; and

Whereas the designation of a National Post-Traumatic Stress Awareness Month and a National Post-Traumatic Stress Awareness Day raises public awareness about issues related to post-traumatic stress, reduces the associated stigma, and helps ensure that those individuals suffering from the invisible wounds of war receive proper treatment: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates—

3 (A) June 2024 as “National Post-Trau-
4 matic Stress Awareness Month”; and

5 (B) June 27, 2024, as “National Post-
6 Traumatic Stress Awareness Day”;

7 (2) supports the efforts of the Secretary of Vet-
8 erans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense, as well
9 as the entire medical community, to educate mem-
10 bers of the Armed Forces, veterans, the families of
11 members of the Armed Forces and veterans, and the
12 public about the causes, symptoms, and treatment of
13 post-traumatic stress;

1 (3) supports efforts by the Secretary of Vet-
2 erans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense to foster
3 cultural change around the issue of post-traumatic
4 stress, understanding that personal interactions can
5 save lives and advance treatment;

6 (4) encourages the leadership of the Armed
7 Forces to support appropriate treatment of men and
8 women of the Armed Forces who suffer from post-
9 traumatic stress; and

10 (5) recognizes the impact of post-traumatic
11 stress on the spouses and families of members of the
12 Armed Forces and veterans.

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