

PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR INTERIM BUDGET COMMITTEE B - HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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First Name:

THOMAS

Last Name:

MAHANY

Email Address:

tom@honorforall.org

Subject:

resolution for post-traumatic stress injury awareness day

Comment:

Elimination of stigma is an essential element in the prevention of suicide. The stigma associated with the term 'Post-traumatic Stress Disorder' affects not just veterans, but all citizens. We are once again asking for help with introducing a Resolution before your Legislature designating June 27 as Post-traumatic Stress Injury Awareness Day in the State of Montana. The perception of personal shortcoming generated by the use of the word 'disorder' adversely affects the welfare of all those among us now struggling with the aftermath of a very common human reaction to very uncommon events. To label our misfortunate compatriots 'disordered' only serves to add perilous dimension to their existing hardship, discouraging many from seeking care while keeping others, particularly those who may not know them, from truly caring. Timely treatment is essential to keeping the injured away from further harm. Stigma interferes with access to that treatment. The term 'PTSD' interferes with access to that treatment. Beyond its fateful obstruction to the healing process, assignment of the word 'disorder' here also serves to negate the sense of honor we all owe the brave men and women who have received these wounds while risking their lives to protect ours, be it on the field of battle, or these days, the emergency rooms of our hospitals. At the community level it disparages the character of victims of crime and abuse, as well as survivors of life-threatening accidents, natural disasters, and more. Labels matter. The 'D' of PTSD stands for DISORDER – a stigmatizing word adding shame to a condition which already comes with its own guilt. The 'I' of PTSI stands for INJURY - an honorable term offering hope, healing, and dignity. Eliminating the shame and adding honor can change the course of lives. Recognizing Post-traumatic Stress as an Injury by officially and publicly declaring a Day of Awareness cannot unwring the bell sounded by the APA in DSM III some forty-two years ago when they coined their original descriptor, but it can serve to redirect public sentiment while we wait for their next Scientific Review Board. Officially and publicly declaring a Day for Post-traumatic Stress Injury Awareness says we are committed to excluding shame, adding honor, and saving lives – now. We hope you will consider helping with these goals and find your way to carry the Resolution for Post-traumatic Stress Injury Awareness Day in Montana. For reference I have attached is a sample draft compiled from previous state and federal texts. For more information about Honor for ALL please visit www.honorforall.org. If you care to discuss this matter by telephone, I can be reached at 248 224 4875.

Sent via leg.mt.gov/lfd/interim-budget-committee-section-b/public-comments-ibc-b/