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ACR-229 Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. (2023-2024)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 229

CHAPTER 198

Relative to Suicide Prevention Awareness Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State August 28, 2024.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 229, Pellerin. Suicide Prevention Awareness Month.

This measure would proclaim the month of September 2024 as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, September is known nationally as "Suicide Prevention Awareness Month" to raise the visibility of the mental health resources and suicide prevention services available in our community; and

WHEREAS, Suicide is a serious public health problem that affects individuals, families, and communities across California; and

WHEREAS, The goal is to speak openly about the importance of mental health and the impacts of suicide to help remove the surrounding stigmas, and to direct those in need to the appropriate support services; and

WHEREAS, Suicidal thoughts can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, income level, religion, or background; and

WHEREAS, According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), suicide is the second leading cause of death among adults 25 to 34 years of age, inclusive, the second leading cause of death among Native American youth 10 to 20 years of age, inclusive, and the third leading cause of death among individuals 10 to 24 years of age, inclusive, in California; and

WHEREAS, Four thousand one hundred forty-three people died by suicide in California in 2020, which, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), was more than twice the number of homicides; and

WHEREAS, In 2023, there was an average of 134 suicides per day in the United States. That is one every 10 minutes; and

WHEREAS, In 2022, 49,476 Americans died by suicide, 68 percent of which were White males; and

WHEREAS, Most of those who died by suicide in California in 2020 were White, at 61 percent, or Hispanic, at 23 percent; and

WHEREAS, Firearms were used in one out of three of those suicide deaths; and

WHEREAS, LGBTQIA+ youth are almost five times as likely to have attempted suicide compared to heterosexual youth, 54 percent of transgender and nonbinary youth in California considered suicide, and 19 percent of transgender and nonbinary youth

attempted suicide in the past year; and

WHEREAS, In 2021, 12,300,000 American adults seriously thought about suicide, 3,500,000 made a plan, and 1,700,000 attempted suicide; and

WHEREAS, In California, the suicide rate is 10.4 per 100,000 residents, compared to 14.04 nationwide; and

WHEREAS, More than 76 percent of communities in California did not have enough mental health providers to serve residents in 2021, according to federal guidelines; and

WHEREAS, In July 2022, the 988 suicide prevention lifeline went live in California, and there was a 45-percent increase in calls thanks to the easy-to-remember three-digit telephone number; and

WHEREAS, Anyone can call or text 988, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year, to receive support when experiencing a suicidal, mental health, or substance use-related crisis; and

WHEREAS, Suicide is preventable: recognize the signs that someone may be suicidal, find the words to speak to them, and direct them to resources; and

WHEREAS, The State of California recognizes the national, state, and local organizations, such as the AFSP, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide (SPTS), The Trevor Project, the State Department of Mental Health, and county departments of behavioral health, are on the front lines of a war that many still refuse to discuss, as suicide and mental health remain too uncomfortable for many to talk about; and

WHEREAS, It may be beneficial to focus prevention programs and resources on vulnerable populations who are most at risk of suicide, including White males, LGBTQIA individuals, youth, veterans, Hispanic individuals, and Native Americans; and

WHEREAS, Other risk factors can also identify groups who may need support, such as older adults with physical health programs, individuals with alcohol or substance abuse problems, individuals with a history of suicidal thoughts or plans, and individuals in crisis; and

WHEREAS, Suicide Prevention Awareness Month is a time to raise awareness of this stigmatized public health crisis in California. The Legislature wants to shift public perception, spread hope, and share vital information to people affected by suicide during this month; and

WHEREAS, California's goal is to ensure that individuals, friends, and families have access to the resources they need to discuss suicide prevention and to seek help; and

WHEREAS, The Legislature encourages all California residents to take the time to ask about the wellbeing of their family, friends, and neighbors over the next few days and to genuinely convey their appreciation for their existence by any gesture they think appropriate, including a simple telephone call, message, handshake, or hug, which can go a long way toward helping someone realize that suicide is not the answer; now therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature hereby proclaims the month of September 2024 as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month; and be it further

Resolved, That the people of California are encouraged to take the time to understand the importance of mental health, recognize the warning signs of suicide, and support those who may be struggling with mental health issues; and be it further

Resolved, That Californians are urged to participate in activities and initiatives that promote awareness, education, and support for suicide prevention; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.