

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 53

By Crowe

A RESOLUTION recognizing suicide as a public health crisis and expressing support for the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act of 2018 and the designation of a three-digit national suicide and mental health crisis hotline.

WHEREAS, each year more than 44,000 Americans die by suicide; and

WHEREAS, in Tennessee, suicide is the tenth leading cause of death overall, the third leading cause of death for individuals between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four, and the second leading cause of death for adults between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-four; and

WHEREAS, last year at least 1,163 Tennesseans committed suicide, and on average that number is about twenty percent higher than the national suicide rate, including all age groups, races, income levels, and geographic locations; and

WHEREAS, in Tennessee, suicide kills more people than homicide, drunk driving, or HIV/AIDS; and

WHEREAS, nationally, suicide rates among youth have increased by more than 200% in the last fifty years; and

WHEREAS, many people are unaware of how to reach suicide or mental health intervention resources in a moment of crisis; and

WHEREAS, the United States Public Health Service has stated that easy access to support for help-seeking individuals is a protective factor for suicide; and

WHEREAS, 9-1-1, an N-1-1 number, is the most recognized and successful phone number in the United States; and

WHEREAS, time and training restraints on most 9-1-1 dispatchers preclude their ability to resolve mental health crisis calls without negatively impacting their primary mission; and

WHEREAS, an N-1-1 number dedicated to mental and behavioral health services, patterned after the successful 9-1-1 model for physical emergencies, could assist individuals with suicidal intervention or other mental health crises and save countless lives; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention encourage a public health approach to suicide prevention; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress has passed the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act of 2018, which was signed into law by President Donald Trump on August 14, 2018, and authorizes the Federal Communications Commission, in coordination with others, to examine the feasibility of designating an N-1-1 dialing code or other covered dialing code to be used for a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that this General Assembly hereby expresses support for the feasibility study being conducted by the Federal Communications Commission and for the creation of a three-digit nationwide suicide and mental health crisis hotline.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this General Assembly also encourages the Federal Communications Commission to work diligently to overcome any obstacles to the creation of a three-digit nationwide suicide and mental health crisis hotline in the United States.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this General Assembly urges other states to pass similar resolutions to show broad support for the creation of a nationwide three-digit suicide and mental health crisis hotline.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chief Clerk of the Senate is directed to transmit enrolled copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, the Speaker and the Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, the President and the Secretary of the United States Senate, each member of the Tennessee Congressional Delegation, and the presiding officers of each of the legislative houses in the other forty-nine states.