

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 19

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives with respect to the seriousness of the national problems associated with mental illness and with respect to congressional intent to establish a ‘Mental Health Advisory Committee’.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 6, 1999

Mrs. ROUKEMA (for herself and Ms. KAPTUR) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives with respect to the seriousness of the national problems associated with mental illness and with respect to congressional intent to establish a ‘Mental Health Advisory Committee’.

Whereas mental illness is not a character flaw, but a tangible and treatable illness as real as epilepsy, hypertension, cancer or heart disease;

Whereas great strides are being made in the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness;

Whereas there remain gaping holes in the network of Federal, State and local services designed to identify and treat people with mental illness;

Whereas millions of Americans suffer from the debilitating effects of serious mental illnesses;

Whereas, more and more, America is witnessing violence resulting from untreated mental illness and a failed policy of deinstitutionalization without any proper community follow-up;

Whereas, all too often, we hear of situations where an individual with a mental disorder has not received adequate treatment and has reacted violently and endangered himself or herself, or, tragically, taken the life of another;

Whereas such a situation occurred at the Capitol last year when officer Jacob J. Chestnut and Special Agent John Gibson tragically lost their lives;

Whereas last year alone, over 1,000 homicides were directly attributable to improperly treated mental illnesses;

Whereas far too many lives are being lost because our country and our communities are not providing early diagnosis, adequate protection, or treatment to individuals with mental illnesses;

Whereas although the treatment of the mentally ill is primarily a function of the separate States, there is a significant sharing of costs between the Federal Government and the States for such treatment, and there are some joint responsibilities of the Federal Government and the States for such treatment;

Whereas Federal issues involving the mentally ill fall under the jurisdiction of several committee jurisdictions, including Education and the Workforce, Ways and Means, Judiciary, Commerce, Veterans' Affairs, Appropriations and Banking through such issues as Medicaid/SSI, housing,

nondiscrimination, prison care, health coverage, the mental health block grants;

Whereas overlapping legal and administrative authorities with respect to the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness make reform of the current system very complex;

Whereas it is necessary to conduct an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of mental health block grants and of the Federal prison costs attributed to mental illness; and

Whereas it is also necessary to conduct an in-depth analysis of issues relating to reciprocity between the States: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-
 2 resentatives that there should be established a ‘Mental
 3 Health Advisory Committee’ that would be responsible for
 4 probing the serious national dimensions of the mentally
 5 ill, including determining the extent to which individuals
 6 with mental illness are not receiving proper treatment and
 7 the extent to which violence is resulting from the lack of
 8 such treatment and prepare a report to the Committees
 9 of jurisdiction outlining options for more effective diag-
 10 nosis and treatment.

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