

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 25

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES TUCK, Kawasaki, Lynn, LeDoux, Muñoz, Hughes

Introduced: 2/17/16

Referred: House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs, State Affairs

A RESOLUTION

1 **Designating June 27, 2016, as Post-Traumatic Stress Injury Awareness Day.**

2 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

3 **WHEREAS** the brave men and women of the armed forces of the United States who
4 proudly serve the nation and risk their lives to protect its citizens deserve the investment of
5 every possible resource to ensure their lasting physical, mental, and emotional well-being; and

6 **WHEREAS** post-traumatic stress occurs after a person experiences trauma and may
7 not only result from the stress of combat, but also from rape, sexual assault, battery, torture,
8 confinement, child abuse, accidents, bombings, or natural disasters; and

9 **WHEREAS** post-traumatic stress is characterized by numerous symptoms, including
10 flashbacks, avoidance, hypervigilance, nightmares, re-experiencing, anxiety, cognitive
11 deficits, irritability, insomnia, fatigue, and thoughts of suicide; and

12 **WHEREAS** combat-related post-traumatic stress is significantly pronounced, given
13 that men and women in the armed forces are highly exposed, often daily, to traumatic events,
14 including life-and-death situations, for weeks, months, and even years; and

15 **WHEREAS** service members and veterans often struggle with combat-related post-
16 traumatic stress for years after leaving service; and

1 **WHEREAS** the extreme survival skills and defensive behaviors acquired as a result
2 of service are often difficult to manage; and

3 **WHEREAS** post-traumatic stress has historically been viewed as a mental illness
4 caused by a preexisting flaw in a person's brain or character, and the term "post-traumatic
5 stress disorder" or "PTSD" carries a stigma that perpetuates this misconception; and

6 **WHEREAS** referring to a post-traumatic stress injury as a disorder perpetuates the
7 stigma against mental illness, which in turn discourages people who suffer from post-
8 traumatic stress injury from seeking proper medical treatment; and

9 **WHEREAS** raising awareness of the condition and eliminating the stigma may
10 encourage people affected to seek help voluntarily and allow for timely treatment that may
11 prevent suicide; and

12 **WHEREAS** efforts should continue to make the condition less stigmatizing and more
13 honorable to increase the number of affected people who may seek help and assistance
14 voluntarily; and

15 **WHEREAS** all people who suffer from post-traumatic stress injury deserve
16 recognition, and people who are affected by post-traumatic stress injury from wounds
17 received while serving the nation further deserve respect and special honor;

18 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature designates June 27, 2016, as
19 Post-Traumatic Stress Injury Awareness Day to bring awareness to the people suffering from
20 post-traumatic stress injury and encourages people to reach out to their fellow citizens to
21 provide support and eliminate the stigma associated with this injury; and be it

22 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature encourages the
23 Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs and the Department of Health and Social
24 Services to continue educating service members and veterans, victims of abuse, crime, and
25 natural disaster, their respective families, and the public about the causes, symptoms, and
26 possible treatment of post-traumatic stress injury.