



# Representative Chris Tuck

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## House Majority Leader

Serving House District 23 • Dimond Estates, Foxridge, Taku, Campbell, Northwood, and Windemere

### Sponsor Statement House Bill 100 Post-Traumatic Stress Injury Awareness Day

Post-traumatic stress injury (PTSI) can develop following any event that makes you fear for your safety, especially if the event feels unpredictable and uncontrollable. PTSI can affect people who personally experience the threatening event, those who witness the event, or those who pick up the pieces afterwards, such as emergency workers. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares, and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event.

It is estimated that almost 260 million people worldwide suffer from PTSI. In the U.S., about 3.5% of adults are diagnosed with PTSI annually. The impact of traumatic events on children is often more far reaching than trauma on adults, not only because the child has fewer emotional and intellectual resources to cope, but also because the child's development is adversely affected. According to one study, more than 60% of children ages 0-17 experienced or witnesses at least one traumatic event.

Between 2000 and 2014, approximately 139,000 active-duty service members were diagnosed with new onset of post-traumatic stress within the Military Health System (MHS). Of these, roughly 112,000 service members were diagnosed following a deployment of 30 days or more to an overseas contingency operation. The numbers presented reflect only those service members identified by the MHS. As such, they may underestimate the true scope of the problem since they do not reflect those service members who choose not to seek assistance because of concerns around stigma and other barriers that may discourage them from seeking help.

Referring to a post-traumatic stress injury as a disorder perpetuates the stigma which in turn discourages people seeking proper medical treatment. Raising awareness of the condition and eliminating the stigma may encourage people affected to seek help voluntarily and allow for timely treatment that may alleviate PTSI symptoms and even prevent suicide.

The United States Senate, United State House of Representatives and 27 states have united by bringing national awareness to individuals who are suffering with PTSI. House Bill 100 will establish June 27 as Post-Traumatic Stress Injury Awareness Day in Alaska, providing an opportunity each year to raise awareness and conduct outreach.

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