

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 30

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVE HERRON

Introduced: 2/19/16

Referred:

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging the American Psychiatric Association to change the term "post-traumatic stress**
2 **disorder" or "PTSD" to "post-traumatic stress injury" or "PTSI"; and urging the**
3 **governor to support usage of the term "post-traumatic stress injury."**

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

5 **WHEREAS** the brave men and women of the armed forces of the United States who
6 proudly serve the nation and risk their lives to protect the freedom of its citizens deserve
7 empathy for and attention to their physical, mental, and emotional well-being; and

8 **WHEREAS** hundreds of thousands of American service members have been
9 clinically diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, and the injury affects an estimated
10 total of 7,700,000 Americans; and

11 **WHEREAS** it is estimated that thousands of Alaskans suffer from combat-related
12 post-traumatic stress injury; and

13 **WHEREAS**, during the American Revolutionary War, a post-traumatic stress injury
14 was called "nostalgia"; during the American Civil War it was known as "soldier's heart";
15 during World War I, it was called "shell shock"; during World War II, it was called "battle

1 fatigue"; during the Korean War, it was called "gross stress reaction"; and during the Vietnam
2 War, it was called "Vietnam combat reaction"; and

3 **WHEREAS** a post-traumatic stress injury occurs after a person has experienced a
4 trauma and can result from the stress of combat, as well as rape, sexual assault, battery,
5 torture, confinement, child abuse, car accidents, train wrecks, plane crashes, bombings, or
6 natural disasters, and is characterized by numerous symptoms, including flashbacks,
7 avoidance, hypervigilance, nightmares, re-experiencing, anxiety, emotional numbness,
8 alienation, cognitive deficits, irritability, insomnia, fatigue, and thoughts of suicide; and

9 **WHEREAS** post-traumatic stress can occur at any age, including in childhood; and

10 **WHEREAS** post-traumatic stress has historically been viewed as a mental illness
11 caused by a preexisting flaw in the person's brain or character; and

12 **WHEREAS** many people still believe post-traumatic stress injury is incurable; and

13 **WHEREAS**, in fact, post-traumatic stress is a very common injury to the brain that is
14 treatable and repairable; and

15 **WHEREAS** the United States Department of Defense, the United States Department
16 of Veterans Affairs, and the National Institute of Mental Health have made significant
17 advances in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of post-traumatic stress injury and its
18 symptoms; and

19 **WHEREAS** the term "post-traumatic stress disorder" carries a stigma of
20 misconceptions that the injury is a disorder that is not repairable or treatable; and

21 **WHEREAS** that stigma discourages people who suffer from post-traumatic stress
22 from seeking proper medical treatment; and

23 **WHEREAS** service members, veterans, first responders, and victims of abuse, crime,
24 and disaster, as well as their family members, see that the negative associations of having a
25 psychological disorder keep some people from seeking treatment; and

26 **WHEREAS** efforts should continue to be made to make the condition less
27 stigmatizing and more honorable to increase the number of those affected voluntarily to seek
28 help and assistance; and

29 **WHEREAS** proper and timely treatment can reduce suicide rates among all citizens,
30 particularly veterans; and

31 **WHEREAS** all citizens who suffer from post-traumatic stress injury deserve

1 recognition, and those who have received those wounds while serving to defend the right to
2 freedom deserve respect and special honor; and

3 **WHEREAS** the American Psychiatric Association uses the term "post-traumatic
4 stress disorder" in the latest edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental
5 Disorders;

6 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature believes that the term "post-
7 traumatic stress disorder" should be universally changed to "post-traumatic stress injury"; and
8 be it

9 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the American
10 Psychiatric Association to change the term "post-traumatic stress disorder" to "post-traumatic
11 stress injury" in the next revision of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental
12 Disorders; and be it

13 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the Governor to
14 support usage of the term "post-traumatic stress injury."

15 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of
16 the United States; the Honorable Ashton B. Carter, United States Secretary of Defense; the
17 Honorable Robert A. McDonald, United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs; General Joseph
18 F. Dunford, Jr., Chair, United States Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Honorable Bill Walker,
19 Governor of Alaska; Brigadier General Laurel J. Hummel, Commissioner, Department of
20 Military and Veterans' Affairs; the Honorable Valerie Davidson, Commissioner, Department
21 of Health and Social Services; the Honorable Craig Stowers, Chief Justice of the Alaska
22 Supreme Court; Renée Binder, M.D., President, American Psychiatric Association; and the
23 Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the
24 Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.