

CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 30(STA)
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Offered: 4/1/16
Referred: Rules

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES HERRON, Tuck, Millett

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"; urging the governor**
3 **to support usage of the term "post-traumatic stress injury"; respectfully requesting that**
4 **the Alaska delegation in Congress champion this change of designation in the United**
5 **States Congress; and designating June 27, 2016, as Post-Traumatic Stress Injury**
6 **Awareness Day.**

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

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

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

14 **WHEREAS** it is estimated that thousands of Alaskans suffer from combat-related

1 post-traumatic stress injury; and

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

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

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

9 **WHEREAS**, during the American Revolutionary War, a post-traumatic stress injury
10 was called "nostalgia"; during the American Civil War it was known as "soldier's heart";
11 during World War I, it was called "shell shock"; during World War II, it was called "battle
12 fatigue"; during the Korean War, it was called "gross stress reaction"; and during the Vietnam
13 War, it was called "Vietnam combat reaction"; and

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

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

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

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

24 **WHEREAS**, in fact, post-traumatic stress is a very common injury to the brain that is
25 treatable and reparable; and

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

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

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

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

6 **WHEREAS** efforts should continue to be made to make the condition less
7 stigmatizing and more honorable to increase the number of those affected who voluntarily
8 seek help and assistance; and

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

11 **WHEREAS** all citizens who suffer from post-traumatic stress injury deserve
12 recognition, and those who have received those wounds while serving our nation and
13 defending our freedom deserve respect and special honor; and

14 **WHEREAS** this resolution does not advocate changing the current qualifications for
15 the Purple Heart; and

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

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

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

26 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the Governor to
27 support usage of the term "post-traumatic stress injury"; and be it

28 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests that
29 the Alaska delegation in Congress champion this change of designation in the United States
30 Congress; and be it

31 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature designates June 27, 2016,

1 as Post-Traumatic Stress Injury Awareness Day to bring awareness to the people suffering
2 from post-traumatic stress injury and encourages people to reach out to their fellow citizens to
3 provide support and eliminate the stigma associated with this injury; and be it

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

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