

**STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE**

2016

Source
CSHJR 30(STA)

**Legislative
Resolve No.**
50



Urging the American Psychiatric Association to change the term "post-traumatic stress disorder" or "PTSD" to "post-traumatic stress injury" or "PTSI"; urging the governor to support usage of the term "post-traumatic stress injury"; respectfully requesting that the Alaska delegation in Congress champion this change of designation in the United States Congress; and designating June 27, 2016, as Post-Traumatic Stress Injury Awareness Day.

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS combat-related post-traumatic stress is significantly pronounced, given that many men and women in the armed forces are highly exposed, often daily, to traumatic

events, including life-and-death situations, for weeks, months, and even years; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS service members, veterans, first responders, and victims of abuse, crime,

and disaster, as well as their family members, see that the negative associations of having a psychological disorder keep some people from seeking treatment; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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