

1 SJR70
2 175880-1
3 By Senator Ward
4 RFD:
5 First Read: 22-MAR-16

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8 ENCOURAGING THE REDUCTION OF THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE
9 WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES IN JAILS.

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11 WHEREAS, counties routinely provide treatment
12 services to the estimated 2 million people with serious mental
13 illnesses booked into jail each year; and

14 WHEREAS, prevalence rates of serious mental
15 illnesses in jails are three to six times higher than for the
16 general public; and

17 WHEREAS, almost three-quarters of adults with
18 serious mental illnesses in jails have co-occurring substance
19 use disorders; and

20 WHEREAS, adults with mental illnesses tend to stay
21 longer in jail and, upon release, are at a higher risk of
22 recidivism than people without these disorders; and

23 WHEREAS, county jails spend two to three times more
24 on adults with mental illnesses that require interventions
25 compared to those without these treatment needs; and

26 WHEREAS, without the appropriate treatment and
27 services, people with mental illnesses continue to cycle

1 through the criminal justice system, often resulting in tragic
2 outcomes for these individuals and their families; and

3 WHEREAS, all counties throughout the State can take
4 pride in their responsibility to protect and enhance the
5 health, welfare, and safety of its residents in efficient and
6 cost-effective ways; and

7 WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of Alabama has
8 passed legislation, created committees and task forces to
9 assist with the Prison Reform effort; and

10 WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of Alabama
11 encourages county partnerships in Alabama through the Stepping
12 Up initiative, the National Association of Counties, the
13 Council of State Governments Justice Center, and the American
14 Psychiatric Association Foundation who are all encouraging
15 public, private, and nonprofit partners to reduce the number
16 of people with mental illnesses in jails; now therefore,

17 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH
18 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That we do hereby encourage the
19 counties throughout Alabama to sign on to the Call to Action
20 to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in our
21 county jail, commit to sharing lessons learned with other
22 counties in the state and across the country to support a
23 national initiative and encourage all county officials,
24 employees, and residents to participate in the Stepping Up
25 Initiative.