

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR
CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION No. 67

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 9, 2024

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably Senate Joint Resolution No. 67.

This joint resolution designates the month of May as “Children’s Mental Health and Trauma Awareness Month” in New Jersey to raise public awareness of mental health, adverse childhood experiences (ACES), and mental illness in children.

Mental illness can adversely affect children in many ways, including increasing the likelihood of a child being suspended from school, abusing drugs or alcohol, or ending up in the juvenile justice system.

ACEs, which are traumatic experiences that occur during childhood, can cause toxic stress, impacting the development of a child’s fundamental brain architecture and stress response systems, and place children who undergo multiple ACEs at a higher risk of suffering from depression, alcohol and substance use disorders, suicidal tendencies, early death, and becoming victims or perpetrators of sexual violence.

Many children with mental health disorders who undergo multiple ACEs do not receive treatment for their illnesses due to poor understanding of mental illness, toxic stress, stigma, and an insufficient number of pediatric mental health professionals in the United States and New Jersey which reduces of access to available treatment options.

The resolution intends to promote awareness of pediatric mental illness and ACEs, in hopes of improving the lives of children who have emotional disturbances, other mental health disorders, or faced trauma and adversity throughout their lives.

This bill was prefiled for introduction in the 2024-2025 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.