

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 460

By McNally

A RESOLUTION to urge the development and implementation of additional specialized mental health crisis intervention training for law enforcement officers.

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee is committed to promoting the health, safety, and general well-being of all its citizens, especially those with mental illnesses; and

WHEREAS, misunderstandings exist about many mental illnesses, and our social culture often wrongly imposes a stigma on them; and

WHEREAS, serious mental illnesses such as a major depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, severe anxiety disorders, borderline personality disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorders affect one in every four people annually; and

WHEREAS, many law enforcement responses to situations involving individuals suffering from mental illnesses require specialized training in crisis intervention; and

WHEREAS, law enforcement agencies that have adopted crisis intervention training programs that emphasize de-escalation strategies and prioritize treatment over incarceration for the mentally ill have seen improved relationships with the community; and

WHEREAS, an increase in mental health crisis intervention training programs would assist law enforcement officers in avoiding the unintentional criminalization of the mentally ill; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that in order to promote the health, safety, and general well-being of the citizens and law enforcement officers of the State of Tennessee, we request that the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and the Peace Officers Standards

and Training Commission, in conjunction with the Department of Veterans Services, the Department of Safety and Homeland Security, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, the Tennessee Highway Patrol, the state Emergency Medical Services Board, the Tennessee Hospital Association, the Tennessee Sheriffs' Association, the Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Tennessee Law Enforcement Training Academy, implement additional specialized mental health crisis intervention training for law enforcement officers and make this training available to law enforcement officers as continuing education credits and to law enforcement officer candidates enrolled in the Tennessee Law Enforcement Training Academy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared and delivered to the Commissioner of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, the Executive Secretary of the Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission, the Commissioner of Veterans Services, the Commissioner of Safety and Homeland Security, the Director of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, the Tennessee Highway Patrol, the state Emergency Medical Services Board, the Tennessee Hospital Association, the Tennessee Sheriffs' Association, the Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Director of the Tennessee Law Enforcement Training Academy.