

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. _____

Recognizing the importance of mental health for youth in the United States, and expressing the pressing need for awareness and support for mental health care for children and adolescents.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. PADILLA submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the importance of mental health for youth in the United States, and expressing the pressing need for awareness and support for mental health care for children and adolescents.

Whereas, over the past few decades and during the COVID–19 pandemic, mental health issues among young people have steadily become worse;

Whereas the Department of Health and Human Services estimates that 49.5 percent of adolescents in the United States have faced a mental health disorder at some point in their lives;

Whereas the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stated that in 2020, during the COVID–19 pandemic, mental health-related emergency room visits for children

aged 5 through 11 years increased by 24 percent, and for children aged 12 through 17 years increased more than 30 percent;

Whereas according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—

(1) suicide is the third leading cause of death among 14- to 18-year-olds in the United States; and

(2) over 20 percent of high school students report serious thoughts of suicide and 10 percent attempt to take their lives;

Whereas the National Institute of Mental Health states the increase in adolescent mental health disorders can lead to a higher propensity to engage in substance use, or face anxiety, depression, or other related conditions later in life; and

Whereas youth populations in rural or underserved areas are less likely to be connected to mental health care: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate recognizes the importance
2 of mental health among youth in the United States, and
3 that in order to increase awareness for mental health care
4 for children and adolescents, the Federal Government
5 must work collaboratively to—

6 (1) encourage States, local educational agencies,
7 schools, and community organizations to support
8 children, youth, and students experiencing mental
9 health challenges at all grade levels by—

1 (A) improving the professional development
2 given to educators so that educators are better
3 equipped to—

4 (i) support student well-being through
5 evidence-based prevention strategies; and

6 (ii) respond to signs and symptoms of
7 mental health disorders among students
8 that educators are in direct contact with;

9 (B) recognizing that young children often
10 go misdiagnosed, undiagnosed, or face stigma
11 when it comes to mental health disorders, and
12 therefore lack adequate services and support
13 when dealing with mental health challenges and
14 crises;

15 (C) raising awareness for high-quality
16 school- and campus-based mental health serv-
17 ices that are evidence-based and trauma-in-
18 formed; and

19 (D) evaluating the preservation of con-
20 tinuity of care for students whose treatment is
21 interrupted;

22 (2) recognize that mental health and physical
23 health are intertwined and can be treated through
24 integrated care services, and that age is not a deter-
25 minant for experiencing a mental health disorder, in

1 that children can face mental health challenges even
2 in early childhood;

3 (3) recognize the urgency for increasing public
4 knowledge of mental health disorders by encouraging
5 Federal, State, and local institutions to disseminate
6 robust resources regarding the effects and available
7 treatment options for various mental health dis-
8 orders;

9 (4) address the stigmas associated with mental
10 health challenges by urging States to adopt peer-to-
11 peer mental health treatment models that prioritize
12 community-based care;

13 (5) create a comprehensive strategy to contact
14 isolated communities with little access to knowledge
15 about and resources for supporting young people ex-
16 periencing mental health disorders; and

17 (6) address and prevent adverse childhood expe-
18 riences, including previous childhood trauma, and
19 other childhood and family risk factors that can lead
20 to involvement in the justice and child welfare sys-
21 tems.