SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 251

Designating the week of September 10, in 2017 and in each succeeding year, as National Suicide Prevention Week in Virginia.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 7, 2017
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 22, 2017

WHEREAS, suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States and the second leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 10 and 34; suicide is the only leading cause of death in the United States that has increased every year for the past decade; and

WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one person dies by suicide every 12.3 minutes in the United States, resulting in nearly 43,000 suicides each year, and it is estimated that there are more than 1.1 million suicide attempts each year; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, Virginia experienced 1,122 deaths by suicide, making suicide the 11th leading cause of death in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, more than 90 percent of the people who die by suicide have a diagnosable and treatable mental health condition, which often goes unrecognized or untreated; and

WHEREAS, according to the CDC, suicide results in an estimated $44.6 billion in combined medical and work loss costs nationally and results in an estimated $1.12 billion in combined lifetime medical and work loss costs in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the stigma associated with mental health conditions and suicidality works against suicide prevention by discouraging persons at risk for suicide from seeking life-saving help and further traumatizes survivors of suicide loss and people with lived experience of suicide; and

WHEREAS, organizations such as the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention envision a world without suicide and are dedicated to saving lives and bringing hope to those affected by suicide through research, education, advocacy, and resources for those who have lost loved ones or struggle with mental health conditions; and

WHEREAS, suicide most often occurs when stressors exceed current coping abilities of someone suffering from a mental health condition, but there is no single cause for suicide, and no single suicide prevention program or effort will be appropriate for all populations or communities; and

WHEREAS, suicide is a preventable national and state public health problem, and suicide prevention is a high priority in the Commonwealth; the World Health Organization recognizes September 10 as World Suicide Prevention Day, and National Suicide Prevention Week is recognized in the United States as the Monday through Sunday surrounding September 10; and

WHEREAS, during National Suicide Prevention Week and throughout the year, organizations and individuals in the Commonwealth are encouraged to consider initiatives based on the goals contained in the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention and develop and implement strategies to increase access to quality mental health, substance abuse, and suicide prevention services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly designate the week of September 10, in 2017 and in each succeeding year, as National Suicide Prevention Week in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention so that members of the organization may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the Senate post the designation of this week on the General Assembly's website.