

**Introduced by Senator Stone
(Coauthors: Senators Bates, Fuller, Huff, Morrell, Nguyen, Runner,
and Vidak)**

May 22, 2015

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 67—Relative to National Mental Health Awareness Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SCR 67, as introduced, Stone. National Mental Health Awareness Month.

This measure would recognize May 2015 as National Mental Health Awareness Month to enhance public awareness of mental illness.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Mental illness is one of the leading causes of
2 disabilities in the United States, affecting one out of every four
3 families and victimizing both the person with the illness and those
4 persons who care for and love the person afflicted; and

5 WHEREAS, Serious mental illness costs Americans
6 approximately \$193.2 billion in lost earnings per year; and

7 WHEREAS, The National Institute of Mental Health has
8 reported that many people suffer from more than one mental
9 disorder at a given time and that 45 percent of those with any
10 mental disorder meet criteria for two or more disorders, including
11 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, HIV/Aids, and cancer, and the
12 severity of the mental disorder strongly relates to comorbidity;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, 57 million Americans have a mental disorder in
15 any given year, but fewer than 40 percent of adults living with a

1 mental illness, and slightly more than one-half of youth 8 to 15
2 years of age, inclusive, with a mental illness received mental health
3 services in the last year; and

4 WHEREAS, Although mental illness impacts all people, many
5 of those in lower-income communities receive less care, poorer
6 quality of care, and often lack access to culturally competent care,
7 thereby resulting in mental health disparities; and

8 WHEREAS, Some see negative perceptions about mental health
9 care as a significant factor contributing to limited or nonexistent
10 access to care, and some common concerns are stigma, culture,
11 masculinity, exposure to violence, and lack of information and
12 awareness, among many others; and

13 WHEREAS, According to the California Reducing Disparities
14 Project report, being misdiagnosed and given severe mental health
15 diagnoses can be stigmatizing and can affect the person's
16 self-esteem, which, in turn, can discourage the person from seeking
17 help; and

18 WHEREAS, The three major brain diseases: schizophrenia,
19 bipolar disorder, and depression, adversely affect the economy,
20 contribute to the rise of incarceration rates, and erode the quality
21 of life for patients and their loved ones; and

22 WHEREAS, Nearly two-thirds of all people with a diagnosable
23 mental illness do not receive mental health treatment due to stigma,
24 lack of community-based resources, inadequate diagnosis, or no
25 diagnosis; and

26 WHEREAS, An estimated 70 percent of all youth in the juvenile
27 justice system have at least one mental health condition, and at
28 least 20 percent live with severe mental illness that is usually
29 undiagnosed, misdiagnosed, untreated, or ineffectively treated,
30 thus leaving those detained in the juvenile justice system in
31 vulnerable condition; and

32 WHEREAS, There is a need to improve public awareness of
33 mental illness and to strengthen local and national awareness of
34 brain diseases, so that all those with mental illness may receive
35 adequate and appropriate treatment that will result in their
36 becoming fully functioning members of society; and

37 WHEREAS, Access to mental health treatment and services is
38 of paramount importance; and

39 WHEREAS, There is a need to encourage primary care
40 physicians to offer screenings, to partner with mental health care

1 providers, to seek appropriate referrals to specialists, and to
2 encourage timely and accurate diagnoses of mental disorders; and
3 WHEREAS, The Legislature wishes to enhance public
4 awareness of mental illness, now, therefore, be it

5 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
6 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature of the State of California
7 hereby recognizes May 2015 as National Mental Health Awareness
8 Month in California to enhance public awareness of mental illness;
9 and be it further

10 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
11 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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