

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

JOINT RESOLUTION DESIGNATING JUNE 27, 2020 AS POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS INJURY AWARENESS DAY

WHEREAS, all veterans of the United States Armed Forces possess the basic human right to the preservation of personal dignity and deserve the investment of every possible resource to ensure their lasting physical, mental and emotional well-being; and

WHEREAS, the diagnosis known as post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, was initially formulated in 1980 by the American Psychiatric Association to more accurately assess and assist veterans who had endured severe combat stress in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, combat stress is an invisible wound that has historically been unjustly portrayed as a mental illness caused by a preexisting flaw of character or ability, and the word "disorder" carries a stigma that perpetuates this misconception; and

WHEREAS, it has been shown through electromagnetic imaging that these invisible wounds can cause physical changes to the brain that more accurately indicate an injury than a disorder; and

WHEREAS, referring to invisible wounds as a disorder may discourage the injured from seeking proper and timely medical treatment; and

WHEREAS, referring to invisible wounds as post-traumatic stress injury, or PTSI, is less stigmatizing and viewed as more honorable, and this designation can favorably influence those affected and encourage them to seek treatment without fear of retribution or shame; and

WHEREAS, post-traumatic stress injury can occur following exposure to extremely traumatic events other than combat such as, but not exclusive to, interpersonal violence, life-threatening accidents and natural disasters; and

WHEREAS, post-traumatic stress injury satisfying the criteria for a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders deserves disability compensation equal to that allowed for PTSD under the law; and

WHEREAS, while all citizens suffering post-traumatic stress injuries deserve our compassion and consideration, those brave men and women of the United States Armed Forces who have received these wounds in operational action against an enemy of the United States further deserve our clear and obvious recognition; and

WHEREAS, timely and appropriate treatment of post-traumatic stress injury can diminish complications and avert suicides; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-ninth Legislature now assembled in the Second Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to designate June 27, 2020 as Post-Traumatic Stress Injury Awareness Day and respectfully urge the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency

Management to continue working to educate victims of interpersonal violence, combat, life-threatening accidents or natural disasters and their families, as well as the general public, about the causes, symptoms and treatment of post-traumatic stress injury.