

## SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 5

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, Supporting the creation of a South Dakota plan for suicide prevention.

WHEREAS, suicide is consistently among the top ten leading causes of death in South Dakota. In recent years suicide has been the second leading cause of death in South Dakota for youth and young adults between the ages of fifteen through thirty-four. Indeed, suicide is the cause of death for about one hundred people every year in South Dakota; and

WHEREAS, between two and three thousand suicide attempts occur annually in South Dakota, resulting in hundreds of serious or disabling physical injuries and in mental and emotional stress to individuals as well as in emotional trauma and hardship to their families; and

WHEREAS, each suicide drastically affects numerous family members, friends, and colleagues who must grieve the death of a loved one, a grief that is debilitating for many people. There are approximately forty thousand people in South Dakota who have had a loss to suicide interrupt their lives; and

WHEREAS, the suicide death rate per one hundred thousand people in South Dakota is about one-and-a-half times the rate of suicide in the United States, on average. The suicide death rate for people, ages fifteen to twenty-four, in South Dakota is twice the rate of suicide in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the suicide completion rate is very high for young people in South Dakota and extremely high for elderly white men and young Native American men; and

WHEREAS, the stigma associated with mental illness deters suicide prevention by keeping people at risk of completing suicide from seeking lifesaving help; and

WHEREAS, the stigma associated with suicide deaths seriously inhibits surviving family members from regaining healthy lives and a sense of meaning in life; and

WHEREAS, suicide deaths impose an enormous unrecognized and unmeasured economic burden on South Dakota in terms of potential years of life lost and medical costs and in terms of decreasing the capacity of mourners to contribute to their work, their families, and their communities; and

WHEREAS, the causes of suicide are complex and multifaceted, involving biological, sociological, psychological, and societal factors; and

WHEREAS, even though the link between mental illness and suicide is well established and many suicides are preventable, there is still an urgent and ongoing need for the development of effective mental-health promotion and suicide prevention programs; and

WHEREAS, the opportunity is present now for a comprehensive, research-based response to suicide prevention because of recent and ongoing advances in clinical research, in the treatment of mental disorders, in basic neuroscience, and in the development of community-based initiatives for prevention; and

WHEREAS, suicide prevention efforts should be encouraged and supported to the greatest extent possible:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Senate of the Seventy-eighth Legislature of the State of South Dakota, the House of Representatives concurring therein, that the Legislature of the State of South Dakota recognizes that suicide is a significant problem in the state, and declares the prevention of suicide be made a state priority by strengthening the private and public entities charged with addressing the problem to be a state priority; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Legislature acknowledges that no single suicide prevention program or effort will be appropriate for all populations or communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Legislature encourages the development and the promotion of accessibility and affordability of mental health services enabling all persons at risk for suicide to obtain effective services without fear of stigma; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Legislature encourages the development of evidence-based initiatives dedicated to preventing suicide, to responding to those at risk for suicide and who have attempted suicide, and to supporting people who have lost someone to suicide; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Legislature supports the creation of a South Dakota plan for suicide prevention that will lay the groundwork for suicide prevention efforts that are designed specifically for use in South Dakota communities and based on the principles outlined in the national strategy for suicide prevention.

Adopted by the Senate,  
Concurred in by the House of Representatives,

February 13, 2003  
February 24, 2003

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Dennis Daugaard  
President of the Senate

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Patricia Adam  
Secretary of the Senate

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Matthew Michels  
Speaker of the House

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Karen Gerdes  
Chief Clerk of the House