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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 275 Session of  
2015

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INTRODUCED BY RESCHENTHALER, TOMLINSON, ARGALL, COSTA, MENSCH,  
McILHINNEY, GREENLEAF, RAFFERTY, BARTOLOTTA, SCAVELLO,  
SABATINA, ALLOWAY AND HAYWOOD, JANUARY 28, 2016

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REFERRED TO PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE, JANUARY 28, 2016

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A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the Congress of the United States to pass H.R. 2646, the  
2 Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2015.

3 WHEREAS, Nearly 10 million Americans have a serious mental  
4 illness such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or major  
5 depression; and

6 WHEREAS, The National Institute of Mental Health reports that  
7 in 2013 an estimated 43.8 million adults, or 18.5% of all adults  
8 18 years of age or older in the United States, had a mental  
9 illness; and

10 WHEREAS, Millions of individuals with mental illness are not  
11 receiving the care needed to keep themselves and others safe  
12 from tragedies; and

13 WHEREAS, Family members and loved ones of those suffering  
14 from mental illness are often restricted from helping to deliver  
15 treatment and care; and

16 WHEREAS, H.R. 2646 seeks to fix the nation's broken mental  
17 health system in order to aid families struggling with mental

1 illness who have loved ones in need of treatment; and

2 WHEREAS, The Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight  
3 and Investigations, chaired by Representative Tim Murphy,  
4 Republican, 18th District of Pennsylvania, reviewed the  
5 country's mental health system beginning January 2013 to  
6 determine why so many who need care are denied access to  
7 treatment; and

8 WHEREAS, This investigation included public forums, hearings  
9 with expert witnesses, and document and budget reviews; and

10 WHEREAS, Chairman Murphy stated that the investigation  
11 "revealed the federal government's approach to mental health is  
12 a chaotic patchwork of antiquated programs and ineffective  
13 policies spread across numerous agencies with little to no  
14 coordination"; and

15 WHEREAS, Although the Federal government dedicates \$130  
16 billion towards mental health annually, our country faces a  
17 number of barriers to adequately addressing the mental health  
18 needs of our population, such as a severe shortage of  
19 psychiatric beds, only one child psychiatrist for every 2,000  
20 children with a mental health disorder and criminal  
21 incarceration facilities serving as three of the largest mental  
22 health hospitals; and

23 WHEREAS, H.R. 2646 endeavors to refocus and increase  
24 interagency coordination for mental health programs, reform  
25 grant standards and remove Federal obstacles to receiving care;  
26 and

27 WHEREAS, H.R. 2646 addresses the need for improved mental  
28 health systems across the country by allowing parents and  
29 caregivers to become meaningful partners with mental health  
30 professionals in addressing their loved ones' mental illness,

1 promoting effective evidence-based care, driving innovative  
2 models of care by reforming standards for grant programs,  
3 addressing the need for more crisis mental health beds,  
4 improving outreach and access to underserved and rural  
5 populations, promoting early intervention and prevention  
6 programs, emphasizing suicide prevention and increasing  
7 physician volunteerism; and

8 WHEREAS, This legislation has gained the support of many  
9 organizations, such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness,  
10 the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association and the  
11 American Psychiatric Association; and

12 WHEREAS, With improved treatment and programs, the United  
13 States can support individuals with a mental illness so they can  
14 lead full, productive lives; therefore be it

15 RESOLVED, That the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
16 urge the Congress of the United States to pass H.R. 2646, the  
17 Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2015; and be it  
18 further

19 RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to  
20 the President of the United States and to each member of  
21 Congress.