ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION
No. 28

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:
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District 34 (Essex and Passaic)
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District 34 (Essex and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman Pinkin and Assemblyman McKeon

SYNOPSIS

Permanently designates last week in February as "Eating Disorders Awareness Week" in New Jersey.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Assembly Health Committee with technical review.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/24/2020)

A JOINT RESOLUTION permanently designating the last week in February as "Eating Disorders Awareness Week in New Jersey."

WHEREAS, Eating disorders are serious mental illnesses that affect people of every age, sex, gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic group; and

WHEREAS, Eating disorders involve serious disturbances in eating behavior, such as extreme and unhealthy reduction of food intake, severe overeating, or feelings of distress or extreme concern about body shape or weight; and

WHEREAS, The four most common eating disorders are anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder, and other specified feeding or eating disorder; and

WHEREAS, Contrary to popular belief, eating disorders are not based on food. There are several contributing factors that can lead to the emergence of an eating disorder, although no defined cause can be found; and

WHEREAS, Growing consensus suggests that a range of biological (genetics), psychological (co-occurrence with depression, anxiety, and other mental health disorders), interpersonal (history of abuse or personal trauma), and social (constant influx of images of beauty and the "perfect" body) factors can lead to an eating disorder; and

WHEREAS, Many eating disorders begin during adolescence, but psychologists and doctors have diagnosed an increasing number of younger children and older adults with these illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Once an eating disorder has developed, it becomes a self-sustaining process that usually requires professional help and support to recover; and

WHEREAS, Eating disorders affect approximately 25 million Americans, 25 percent of whom are male; and

WHEREAS, Eating disorders are common, may be difficult to detect, and in severe cases, can lead to death. Studies have shown that: anorexia has the highest mortality rate among all psychological disorders; 64 percent of those who suffer from bulimia are a near normal weight; binge eating disorder is the most common eating disorder in the United States; and two-thirds of individuals with anorexia also showed signs of a co-occurring anxiety disorder; and

WHEREAS, The warning signs of eating disorders include, but are not limited to, a preoccupation with weight loss, dieting, and food control; severe fluctuations in weight; evidence of purging behaviors or binge eating; non-specific complains of constipation, acid reflux, and abdominal pain; dental problems; muscle weakness; lethargy; and impaired immune functioning; and

WHEREAS, Eating disorders affect every organ system in the body. Purging by vomiting or laxative leads to electrolyte imbalances that affect the cardiovascular system; binge eating and food restriction cause disturbances in the gastrointestinal system; and fasting and starvation deprive the brain of essential energy; and

WHEREAS, Complete recovery from an eating disorder is possible and contingent upon early diagnosis and a treatment plan that involves a combination of psychological and nutritional counseling and medical and psychiatric monitoring; and

WHEREAS, Treatment must also address an eating disorder's symptoms and medical consequences as well as the biological, psychological, interpersonal, and social factors that contribute to the disorder; and

WHEREAS, The National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) supports individuals and families affected by eating disorders, and serves as a catalyst for prevention, treatment, cures, and access to quality care; and

WHEREAS, Raising public awareness about eating disorders and the work NEDA does in providing services to, and advocating for early intervention and improved access to treatment for, individuals with eating disorders could encourage those suffering from eating disorders and their families to seek the support they need overcome these life-threatening illnesses; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. The last week in February shall permanently be designated as "Eating Disorders Awareness Week" in New Jersey in order to raise public awareness about eating disorders and the work the National Eating Disorders Association does in providing services to, and advocating for early intervention and improved access to treatment for, individuals with eating disorders and encourage those suffering from eating disorders and their families to seek the support they need to overcome these life-threatening illnesses.

2. The Governor is respectfully requested to annually issue a proclamation recognizing the last week in February as "Eating Disorders Awareness Week" in New Jersey, and calling upon public officials and the citizens of this State to observe the week with appropriate activities and programs.

3. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly or the Secretary of State to the National Eating Disorders Association.

4. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.