
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 779 Session of
2020

INTRODUCED BY BULLOCK, CEPHAS, KIM, SAPPEY, DONATUCCI, KINSEY,
MURT, FREEMAN, LONGIETTI, WHEATLEY, KORTZ, YOUNGBLOOD,
THOMAS, WILLIAMS, CONKLIN, SANCHEZ, HILL-EVANS, McCLINTON,
GAINEY, DeLUCA, KIRKLAND AND ROEBUCK, FEBRUARY 28, 2020

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, FEBRUARY 28, 2020

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating the month of May 2020 as "Mental Health Awareness in
2 the Black Community Month" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, Persistent racial inequality and race-based
4 exclusion in the United States has translated into continuing
5 mental health disparities among African Americans and a
6 continuing mental health care gap; and

7 WHEREAS, African Americans are 20% more likely to suffer
8 serious psychological distress and are also more likely to have
9 feelings of sadness, helplessness and worthlessness than other
10 racial groups; and

11 WHEREAS, Twenty-five percent of African Americans seek and
12 access mental health services as compared to 40% of individuals
13 representing other racial groups; and

14 WHEREAS, Although African-American teenagers are less likely
15 than other racial groups to die from suicide, they are more
16 likely to attempt suicide; and

17 WHEREAS, The American Psychological Association has reported

1 that young adult African Americans who have acquired higher
2 levels of education are less likely than other young adults to
3 seek mental health services; and

4 WHEREAS, Compared with other racial groups, African Americans
5 are more likely to use emergency rooms or primary care rather
6 than mental health specialists for care and treatment; and

7 WHEREAS, One out of every three African Americans who need
8 mental health care receives it; and

9 WHEREAS, Marriage and family therapists Jaynay Johnson and
10 Farida Saleem-Boyer established the Black Brain Campaign to
11 strengthen families within the African-American community; and

12 WHEREAS, The inaugural Black Brain Campaign in 2016 spurred
13 Philadelphia-area clinicians to explore mental health reforms
14 for African Americans; and

15 WHEREAS, The structure provided by a cohesive family and
16 extended family is essential in confronting racial disparities,
17 transcending cultural and bureaucratic barriers and reducing
18 stigmas and discrimination; and

19 WHEREAS, School-based counselors and community-based
20 counselors are also essential in coordinating available mental
21 health resources and addressing the silence and the fears that
22 can perpetuate cycles of trauma; and

23 WHEREAS, Other mental health professionals, health care
24 providers and social service providers are vital in confronting
25 provider bias where it exists; and

26 WHEREAS, Health policy experts and advocates are also
27 important to close the racial gaps in mental health status and
28 mental health care; therefore be it

29 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate the
30 month of May 2020 as "Mental Health Awareness in the Black

1 Community Month" in Pennsylvania; and be it further

2 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize an
3 imperative for health care policy reforms, interventions and
4 initiatives to eliminate mental health disparities based on
5 race, ethnicity, education, income or geography.