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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 127 Session of  
2021

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INTRODUCED BY KIRKLAND, HILL-EVANS, SANCHEZ, LONGIETTI, HOWARD,  
SCHLOSSBERG, RYAN, HOHENSTEIN, NEILSON, GAYDOS, PASHINSKI,  
DRISCOLL, GALLOWAY, SCHLEGEL CULVER, CIRESI, WEBSTER, O'MARA,  
YOUNG, DEASY, SCHWEYER AND SAINATO, AUGUST 5, 2021

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY  
PREPAREDNESS, AUGUST 5, 2021

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A RESOLUTION

1 Designating May 7, 2021, as "First Responders Mental Health  
2 Awareness Day" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, Historically, traumatic stress and post-traumatic  
4 stress disorder (PTSD) have been conditions associated with  
5 those who have experienced combat or been in the military; and

6 WHEREAS, Recently, there has been mounting evidence that  
7 first responders also experience these conditions at alarming  
8 rates; and

9 WHEREAS, First responders have an "invisible" integrity that  
10 they believe differentiates them from the general public; and

11 WHEREAS, There is ample evidence to suggest that many first  
12 responders deny or resist seeking mental health care due to the  
13 longstanding stigmatization of mental health disorders; and

14 WHEREAS, For many first responders, there is an underlying  
15 fear of being subjected to ridicule, prejudice, discrimination  
16 and labeling if they seek mental health care; and

1       WHEREAS, Development of PTSD in police officers varies widely  
2 depending on daily duties, including whether they have used  
3 their firearm in the line of duty and the crime rate of the  
4 location where they serve; and

5       WHEREAS, Some studies estimate that approximately 15% to 18%  
6 of police officers suffer from PTSD; and

7       WHEREAS, The prevalence of PTSD among firefighters has been  
8 estimated at 20%, possibly higher for volunteer firefighters;  
9 and

10       WHEREAS, Emergency medical first responders are called to the  
11 scene of gruesome car accidents, homicides and other accidents  
12 and often witness death firsthand; and

13       WHEREAS, Studies estimate that PTSD rates may be as high as  
14 20% for emergency medical first responders; and

15       WHEREAS, As public officials, we have a responsibility to  
16 make this epidemic a mental health priority; and

17       WHEREAS, It is important to promote hotlines that help first  
18 responders deal with their mental health disorders; and

19       WHEREAS, Safe Call Now, at 1-206-459-3020, is a confidential  
20 helpline staffed by first responders for first responders and  
21 their families to assist them with mental health, substance  
22 abuse and other personal issues; and

23       WHEREAS, Copline, at 1-800-267-5463, is a confidential  
24 helpline for members of law enforcement; and

25       WHEREAS, Frontline Helpline, at 1-866-676-7500, is a  
26 confidential helpline for first responders that is staffed by  
27 first responders; therefore be it

28       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate May 7,  
29 2021, as "First Responders Mental Health Awareness Day" in  
30 Pennsylvania; and be it further

1       RESOLVED, That the Commonwealth continue its efforts to  
2 provide information to members of law enforcement and other  
3 first responders on mental health care resources available to  
4 them.