

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 831

Designating October 10, 2022, as “World Mental Health Day”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 15, 2022

Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. CASSIDY) submitted the following resolution;
which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Designating October 10, 2022, as “World Mental Health
Day”.

Whereas mental health and psychosocial support services with an emphasis on systems strengthening and sound investment to ensure availability, quality, and access to services that meet the needs of children, adolescents, and adults are priorities for the global community;

Whereas the World Federation for Mental Health identifies a different theme each year for World Mental Health Day, and the 2022 theme is “Make Mental Health & Well-Being for All a Global Priority”;

Whereas the World Health Organization identified that, in 2019, 1 in 8 individuals worldwide, or 970,000,000 individuals, were living with a mental health disorder, with anxiety and depressive disorders most common;

Whereas, in the first year of the COVID–19 pandemic, global prevalence of anxiety and depression increased by a massive 25 percent, according to a scientific brief released by the World Health Organization;

Whereas children and adolescents especially need support, due to the impact the COVID–19 pandemic has had on individuals and families worldwide;

Whereas, 2 years into the COVID–19 pandemic, the social and economic devastation is weighing most heavily on children, particularly in the poorest and most marginalized communities;

Whereas children experience the greatest burden of the secondary impacts of the COVID–19 pandemic, due to increased poverty, interrupted education, increased risks of abuse and exploitation, and weakened health systems;

Whereas it is estimated that 100,000,000 additional children are now living in poverty because of the COVID–19 pandemic alone, which is a 10 percent increase since 2019, at least $\frac{2}{3}$ of households with children have lost income since 2020, and $\frac{3}{4}$ of households with 3 or more children have experienced a drop in earnings since 2020;

Whereas experts from organizations like the United Nations Children’s Fund estimate it will take not less than 7 or 8 years to return to pre-COVID child poverty levels;

Whereas an estimated 6,700,000 children have suffered from the loss of a mother, father, or other primary caregiver due to COVID–19 during the past 2 years;

Whereas more than 616,000,000 children are still affected by full or partial school closures, and education disruptions in low- and middle-income countries have left up to 70 percent of 10-year-olds unable to read;

Whereas, as a result of the COVID–19 pandemic, shuttered schools, lockdowns, and disruptions to services that protect girls mean that in the next decade it is estimated—

- (1) an additional 2,000,000 girls may suffer from female genital mutilation; and
- (2) an additional 10,000,000 child marriages may occur;

Whereas the COVID–19 pandemic spurred a 50 percent increase in internet use among children aged 6 to 12 in the United States alone, which has led to a rapid increase in the online sexual exploitation and abuse of children;

Whereas the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children received nearly 22,000,000 reports to its CyberTipline in 2020, a 28 percent increase from 2019;

Whereas mental health conditions affect more than 13 percent of adolescents aged 10 to 19 worldwide, and by October 2020, the COVID–19 pandemic had disrupted or halted critical mental health services in 93 percent of countries globally;

Whereas an additional 9,000,000 children are at risk of being pushed into child labor by the end of 2022 as a result of the COVID–19 pandemic;

Whereas an additional 9,000,000 children could suffer from wasting, the most life-threatening form of malnutrition, due to the impact of the COVID–19 pandemic on the diets of children, nutrition services, and feeding practices;

Whereas parent and caregiver mental health and well-being is a key to thriving families, and supporting children’s mental health means supporting their families and caregivers as well;

Whereas acting early to support children and caregivers is the preferred investment for governments to promote good mental health, prevent poor mental health, and respond to the complex mental health issues facing children and families;

Whereas governments and societies should prioritize investing in promoting, protecting, and caring for the mental health of children and their caregivers; and

Whereas, to combat the dangerous decline in mental health described in this preamble, the United States can and should lead by example: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates October 10, 2022 as “World
3 Mental Health Day”;

4 (2) recognizes that mental health and psycho-
5 social support are priorities in addressing the holis-
6 tic needs of children, youth, and families;

7 (3) recognizes that children and adolescents
8 have faced increased risk of diminished economic
9 standing, education, and physical and mental health,
10 especially in developing countries; and

11 (4) recognizes that interagency coordination
12 and collaboration are essential to ensuring the well-
13 being of children and their ability to develop, sur-
14 vive, and thrive during and after the COVID–19
15 pandemic.

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