

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 86

Expressing the sense of Congress that an appropriate month should be recognized as Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month to enhance public awareness of mental illness, especially within minority communities.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 8, 2007

Mrs. JONES of Ohio submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress that an appropriate month should be recognized as Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month to enhance public awareness of mental illness, especially within minority communities.

Whereas mental illness is one of the leading causes of disability in the United States, affecting one out of every four families in the United States and victimizing both those with the illness and those who care for and love those afflicted;

Whereas three major brain diseases, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and depression, adversely affect the economy, contribute to the rise in incarceration rates, and erode the quality of family life of those involved;

Whereas the National Institute of Mental Health has reported that many people suffer from more than one mental disorder at a given time;

Whereas nearly half (45 percent) of those with any mental disorder meet criteria for two or more health disorders, with severity strongly related to co-morbidity, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, HIV/AIDS, and cancer;

Whereas according to the Office of Minority and National Affairs for the American Psychiatric Association, although mental disorders impact all groups of people, African Americans experience a greater unmet need for mental health services than other groups of people and receive a lesser quality of care than such other groups;

Whereas according to the National Alliance for Mentally Ill, the direct and indirect costs to the workplace resulting from the affects of mental disorders equal \$34,000,000;

Whereas two-thirds of all people with a diagnosable mental disorder do not seek treatment, especially people from diverse communities;

Whereas the consequences of mental disorders, especially depression, are felt acutely among minority communities;

Whereas such consequences include physical symptoms and the obstacle of being confronted with the stigma associated with diagnosis and treatment associated with mental disorders, which proves to be a major obstacle that prevents people from getting help;

Whereas to this end, communities of color are in need of culturally and linguistically competent mental health resources, including for purposes of encouraging the provision of mental health services by health care providers

from multi-ethnic communities and training all health care providers to serve multi-ethnic consumers;

Whereas the customs, values, and traditions of African Americans, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans, and other underserved groups, must be taken into consideration when attempting to treat and diagnose mental disorders;

Whereas minority mental health consumers often fall into the category of the “working poor”, face additional challenges because of the lack of adequate insurance available to them, and are underinsured or uninsured, which often leads to the late diagnosis of a mental disorder or the failure to make such a diagnosis;

Whereas community mobilization of resources is needed to educate, advocate, and train mental health providers in order to help to remove barriers to treatment of mental disorders;

Whereas there is a need to strengthen local and national awareness of brain diseases in order to assist with advocacy for mentally ill persons of color, so that such persons may receive adequate and appropriate treatment that will enhance their ability to become fully functioning members of society;

Whereas the late Bebe Moore Campbell, a New York Times best-selling author, co-founder of NAMI Urban Los Angeles, mother, grandmother, wife, friend, and advocate, was recognized for her tireless fight to bring awareness and attention to mental illness among minorities with the release of her novel, “72 Hour Hold”, and her children’s book, “Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry”, which brings awareness to the plight of those with brain disorders; and

Whereas Bebe Moore Campbell's dedication and commitment sought to move communities to support mental wellness through effective treatment options, supportive community outreach, and resilience for the many individuals with mental disorders who are unable to speak for themselves: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of Congress that—

3 (1) access to mental health treatment and serv-
4 ices and public awareness of mental illness is of
5 paramount importance;

6 (2) improved access to such treatment and serv-
7 ices and improved public awareness of mental illness
8 is especially needed in minority communities; and

9 (3) an appropriate month should be recognized
10 as Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental
11 Health Awareness Month to enhance public aware-
12 ness of mental illness, especially within such minor-
13 ity communities.

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