

leading on this incredibly important issue that is before us.

I rise in support of Congressman MURPHY's bill, H.R. 2646, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2015. You know this significant piece of legislation aims to address the fact that millions of Americans who suffer from a serious mental illness are going without treatment, as families and caregivers struggle to find support in a disorganized healthcare system.

I practiced rehabilitation services for 28 years before I had the privilege and honor in 2009 to come to work on behalf of the citizens of Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District. Part of my career was working acute psychiatric services, working with people that were experiencing some of the most chronic and reoccurring disabling conditions that are out there.

Many times the system that we are in only really responded when people were in crisis, but it only responded to the point that the person was no longer a danger to themselves or someone else.

The system did not allow for the types of resources to be deployed and the care to be provided to really meet the needs of these individuals to stop the cycle.

It was really a privilege and honor to work with many different individuals and many different family members.

But I am so excited about this step that we are taking with this bill, and I really encourage leadership. This is a bill whose time is now. We need to elevate it to the House and to the Senate. This needs to be on the President's desk because we can make a difference in people's lives with this bill.

It is hard to deny the staggering consequences of neglecting our mental health system. Suicide rates are at the highest they have been in more than 25 years. Our nationwide shortage of psychiatric beds is nearly at 100,000. The three largest mental health hospitals in the United States are classified as criminal incarceration facilities, prisons.

I have taken the opportunity—I think it is important—to make visits to our prisons within the congressional district. I have done that. I have more of those visits coming up.

It is very apparent to me that, as we have closed in the past facilities that perhaps we could have improved upon versus closing, all we did was shift people to the streets and from the streets to the prisons.

So many people today have a dual diagnosis, some type of psychiatric diagnosis, but also a substance abuse diagnosis, which tends to be a part of that spiral. And your heart breaks to see that.

If we want to reduce our prison population and the cost that it takes to maintain individuals, then this bill is a good step in that direction of breaking that cycle. I would argue that this bill will help have a cost savings over time, short term and certainly long term.

Congressman MURPHY has taken a compassionate and evidence-based approach to reforming the way the Federal Government addresses mental health.

H.R. 2646 breaks down barriers for families. It encourages innovative models of care. It advances early intervention and prevention programs.

Notably, it employs telepsychiatry to reach underserved and rural population areas where patients have difficulty accessing needed care. I know for a fact using telepsychiatry reduces the stigma of reaching out for help.

I authored a bill that has become law. It is called the STEP law, the Servicemember Telemedicine Electronic Portability Act, which we really did this for our military, our Active-Duty military Reserve and Guard.

We changed the law a few years back with a piece of legislation that has expanded telemedicine that is used by the Department of Defense, and it really has helped save lives. It has not been the only thing we have done, but it was a valuable part in the reduction of the suicide rate among our military.

So we know the many provisions within this bill are tested. They are proven. There are lives to be improved and lives to be saved. It recognizes the important role of the family, the caregiver.

Now, these are some of the most chronic and recurring conditions, and you need a strong support system. The way our system is today, it excludes those family members.

So there is just a lot to support here, and I am certainly proud to do it.

It is important that we make a commitment to address mental health with the same urgency as we do physical health.

I will remain steadfast in my support for H.R. 2646, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. In my closing minute, let me say this: As I opened up, this will be known as the bloody summer of 2015. Let this time be the autumn of our compassion in 2015.

The time is now. We have 40 newspapers around this country that have published endorsements for this legislation. We have 133 bipartisan cosponsors.

I plead with my colleagues to please become a cosponsor to this bill. I beg leadership. Let's no longer have a blind eye to this, let's no longer have a moment of silence, and let this be the time of our action.

Let's pass H.R. 2646, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act, and let's bring compassion and care to the many families in America who are suffering from mental illness and show them that that twilight, as the sun sets, is indicating that there soon will be a dawn of great hope in America.

I yield back the balance of my time.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF ESTABLISHING A SELECT INVESTIGATIVE PANEL OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

Ms. FOXX (during the Special Order of Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114-288) on the resolution (H. Res. 461) establishing a Select Investigative Panel of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3192, HOMEBUYERS ASSISTANCE ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 12, 2015, THROUGH OCTOBER 19, 2015

Ms. FOXX (during the Special Order of Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114-289) on the resolution (H. Res. 462) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3192) to provide for a temporary safe harbor from the enforcement of integrated disclosure requirements for mortgage loan transactions under the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act of 1974 and the Truth in Lending Act, and for other purposes, and providing for proceedings during the period from October 12, 2015, through October 19, 2015, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. HUDSON (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today and October 7 on account of family reasons.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 2835. An act to actively recruit members of the Armed Forces who are separating from military service to serve as Customs and Border Protection officers.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on October 5, 2015, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill:

H.R. 1624. To amend title I of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act to revise the definition of small employer.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.