

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019

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SENATE BILL 458
Second Edition Engrossed 5/2/19

Short Title: Establish Posttraumatic Stress Injury Day. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Brown, J. Jackson, Burgin (Primary Sponsors); and Smith.

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

April 2, 2019

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT DESIGNATING POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS INJURY AWARENESS DAY IN
NORTH CAROLINA AND ESTABLISHING A JOINT LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON
SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST (SCA) IN STUDENT ATHLETES.

Whereas, all citizens of the United States possess the basic human right to the
preservation of personal dignity; and

Whereas, all citizens of the United States deserve the investment of every possible
resource to ensure their lasting physical, mental, and emotional well-being; and

Whereas, the diagnosis known as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was initially
formulated in 1980 by the American Psychiatric Association to more accurately assess and assist
veterans who had endured severe combat stress in Vietnam; and

Whereas, combat stress is an invisible wound which has historically been unjustly
portrayed as a mental illness caused by a preexisting flaw of character or ability, and that the
word "disorder" carries a stigma which perpetuates this misconception; and

Whereas, it has been shown through electromagnetic imaging that these invisible
wounds can cause physical changes to the brain which more accurately describe an injury than a
disorder; and

Whereas, referring to invisible wounds as a disorder can discourage the injured from
seeking proper and timely medical treatment; and

Whereas, referring to invisible wounds as posttraumatic stress injury (PTSI) is less
stigmatizing and viewed as more honorable, and this designation can favorably influence those
affected and encourage them to seek treatment without fear of retribution or shame; and

Whereas, PTSI can occur following exposure to extremely traumatic events other than
combat such as interpersonal violence, life-threatening accidents, and natural disasters; and

Whereas, PTSI-satisfying criteria A through H of the diagnosis for PTSD in the
Diagnostic Statistical Manual deserves disability compensation equal to that allowed for PTSD
under the law; and

Whereas, timely and appropriate treatment of PTSI can diminish complications and
avert suicides; and

Whereas, all citizens suffering PTSIs deserve our compassion and consideration,
those brave men and women of the United States Armed Forces who have received these wounds
in operational action against an enemy of the United States further deserve our clear and obvious
recognition; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Chapter 103 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new
section to read:



1 **"§ 103-15. Posttraumatic stress injury awareness.**

2 June 27 of each year is designated as Posttraumatic Stress Injury Awareness Day in North
3 Carolina."

4 **SECTION 2.** There is created the Joint Legislative Task Force on Sudden Cardiac
5 Arrest in Student Athletes (Task Force).

6 **SECTION 3.** The Task Force shall consist of seven members as follows:

- 7 (1) Two members of the Senate appointed upon the recommendation of the
8 President Pro Tempore of the Senate, with one of those members serving as a
9 cochair.
10 (2) Two members of the House of Representatives appointed upon the
11 recommendation of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, with one of
12 those members serving as a cochair.
13 (3) The Secretary of Health and Human Services or his or her designee.
14 (4) The Superintendent of Public Instruction or his or her designee.
15 (5) A representative of the American Heart Association appointed upon the
16 recommendation of the cochairs.

17 **SECTION 4.** The Task Force shall study the following:

- 18 (1) The frequency of sudden cardiac arrest or other heart conditions in student
19 athletes.
20 (2) Other jurisdictions that have implemented strategies to mitigate risks to
21 student athletes, such as mandatory heart exams.
22 (3) The cost of requiring student athletes to be tested for heart conditions.
23 (4) Any other issue the Task Force considers relevant.

24 **SECTION 5.** The Task Force shall meet upon the call of its cochairs. A quorum of
25 the Task Force is a majority of its members. No action may be taken except by a majority vote
26 at a meeting at which a quorum is present. The Task Force, while in the discharge of its official
27 duties, may exercise all powers provided for under G.S. 120-19 and G.S. 120-19.1 through
28 G.S. 120-19.4. The Task Force may contract for professional, clerical, or consultant services, as
29 provided by G.S. 120-32.02. If the Task Force hires a consultant, the consultant shall not be a
30 State employee or a person currently under contract with the State to provide services. Members
31 of the Task Force shall receive per diem, subsistence, and travel allowance as provided in
32 G.S. 120-3.1, 138-5, or 138-6, as appropriate. The expenses of the Task Force shall be considered
33 expenses incurred for the joint operation of the General Assembly.

34 **SECTION 6.** The Legislative Services Officer shall assign professional and clerical
35 staff to assist the Task Force in its work. The Director of Legislative Assistants of the House of
36 Representatives and the Director of Legislative Assistants of the Senate shall assign clerical
37 support to the Task Force.

38 **SECTION 7.** Meetings of the Task Force shall begin no later than October 1, 2019.
39 The Task Force shall submit a final report on the results of its study and development, including
40 proposed legislation to the General Assembly on or before April 1, 2020, by filing a copy of the
41 report with the Office of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Office of the Speaker of
42 the House of Representatives, and the Legislative Library. The Task Force shall terminate on
43 April 1, 2020, or upon the filing of its final report, whichever comes first.

44 **SECTION 8.** This act is effective when it becomes law.