

**Assembly Concurrent Resolution**

**No. 150**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Carter**

April 6, 2010

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 150—Relative to African American Mental Health Awareness Week.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 150, as introduced, Carter. African American Mental Health Awareness Week.

This measure would recognize each second week of February hereafter as African American Mental Health Awareness Week.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, According to the Surgeon General of the United  
2 States, mental illnesses are more prevalent in the African American  
3 community compared to other cultures in the United States; and  
4 WHEREAS, African Americans suffer as a result of suicide,  
5 depression, misdiagnosis, over use of involuntary hospitalization,  
6 incarceration, and self-medication via substance abuse; and  
7 WHEREAS, The Office of Minority Health reports that African  
8 Americans are 30 percent more likely to report having serious  
9 psychological distress than Whites, yet Whites are more likely to  
10 receive treatment for a major depressive episode than African  
11 Americans; and  
12 WHEREAS, Suicide is the third leading cause of death for all  
13 teens in the United States, and the third leading cause of death for  
14 African American youth 15 to 24 years of age, inclusive. The  
15 suicide rate among African Americans within the last 30 years has

1 increased dramatically. Between 1980 and 1995 the suicide rates  
2 for African American youth 10 to 14 years of age, inclusive, has  
3 increased by 233 percent, compared to 120 percent for comparable  
4 Whites; and

5 WHEREAS, In the United States African Americans account  
6 for only 2 percent of psychiatrists, 2 percent of psychologists, and  
7 4 percent of social workers; and

8 WHEREAS, African American patients are at a higher risk of  
9 misdiagnosis or overdiagnosis than White patients; and

10 WHEREAS, Children in the foster care and child welfare system  
11 are more likely to develop mental illness, and African American  
12 children comprise 40 percent of the foster care system; and

13 WHEREAS, Prison inmates are at high risk for developing  
14 mental illness and less likely to be diagnosed with a mental illness,  
15 and half of all prisoners in the United States are African American;  
16 and

17 WHEREAS, The African American Mental Health Coalition is  
18 committed to empowering African American communities by  
19 promoting the benefits of mental health services, through education,  
20 advocacy, policy development, raising awareness, and decreasing  
21 the stigma surrounding mental health; and

22 WHEREAS, The African American Mental Health Coalition  
23 has introduced creative and innovative community-based programs  
24 and partnered with a variety of local community organizations to  
25 help prevent improper interventions, misdiagnosis, involuntary  
26 incarceration, and decrease the stigma related to mental health  
27 issues in the African American community; and

28 WHEREAS, The African American Mental Health Coalition is  
29 recognized as an important partner in the success of African  
30 American Health Awareness Week, through its continued efforts  
31 to provide services, information, and advocacy to individuals  
32 throughout the African American community, and to make positive  
33 changes by increasing awareness and eliminating barriers to care;  
34 now, therefore, be it

35 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*  
36 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature recognizes each second  
37 week of February hereafter as African American Mental Health  
38 Awareness Week; and be it further

- 1     *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
- 2     of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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