

1 **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING**
2 **IDENTIFICATION AND SUPPORT OF TRAUMATIC**
3 **CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES SURVIVORS**

4 2017 GENERAL SESSION

5 STATE OF UTAH

6 **Chief Sponsor: Edward H. Redd**

7 Senate Sponsor: Todd Weiler

8	Cosponsors:	Lynn N. Hemingway	Val K. Potter
9	Patrice M. Arent	Sandra Hollins	Marie H. Poulson
10	Joel K. Briscoe	Ken Ivory	Susan Pulsipher
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12	Kay J. Christofferson	Karen Kwan	Raymond P. Ward
13	Brad M. Daw	Karianne Lisonbee	Elizabeth Weight
14	Rebecca P. Edwards	Carol Spackman Moss	Mark A. Wheatley
15	Steve Eliason	Derrin R. Owens	
	Stephen G. Handy		

17 **LONG TITLE**

18 **General Description:**

19 This concurrent resolution encourages state officers, agencies, and employees to
20 promote interventions and practices to identify and treat child and adult survivors of
21 severe emotional trauma and other adverse childhood experiences using interventions
22 proven to help and develop resiliency in these survivors.

23 **Highlighted Provisions:**

24 This resolution:
25 ▶ highlights recent advances in understanding the impact of adverse childhood
26 experiences on an individual's future outcomes;

- 27 ▶ encourages state officers, agencies, and employees to become informed regarding
- 28 well-documented detrimental short-term and long-term impacts to children and
- 29 adults from serious traumatic childhood experiences; and
- 30 ▶ encourages state officers, agencies, and employees to implement evidence-based
- 31 interventions and practices that are proven to be successful in developing resiliency
- 32 in children and adults currently suffering from trauma-related disorders.

33 **Special Clauses:**

34 None



36 *Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:*

37 WHEREAS, there have been recent significant advances in neuroscience with increased

38 understanding of how emotional neglect and exposure to serious trauma affect the way children

39 perceive and interact with their world both during childhood and into adulthood;

40 WHEREAS, post-traumatic stress disorder and other trauma-related disorders in

41 children and adults can be caused both by exposure to a single severe traumatic incident or by

42 exposure to a cumulative series of serious traumatic events;

43 WHEREAS, such traumatic incidents and events include emotional and physical abuse

44 and neglect, sexual abuse, separation from or loss of a parent due to divorce or other reasons,

45 serious injury or death of a parent, exposure to family discord, domestic violence, parental

46 mental illness, substance abuse, criminal activity in the home, and other traumatic and

47 nonnurturing experiences and environments;

48 WHEREAS, abuse, neglect, and traumatic events compose part of what has been

49 described in the medical literature as "adverse childhood experiences" or "ACEs," and the

50 cumulative potential impact to a child who has a significant history of exposure to neglect and

51 trauma can be calculated using what is called an ACE score;

52 WHEREAS, it is now understood that significant exposure to severe traumatic events

53 as outlined above can negatively affect the neurobiology and anatomy of a child's developing

54 brain and result in a substantially impaired ability to absorb new information, develop healthy
55 coping skills, and adapt to life's challenges as the child becomes locked into a
56 "fight-flight-or-freeze" mode that becomes the child's and future adult's default approach when
57 interacting with the world around them;

58 WHEREAS, children and adults whose brains have been negatively affected by
59 exposure to severe or repeated serious trauma, often experience persistent and sometimes
60 overwhelming dysfunctional emotions of fear, anxiety, depression, hopelessness, and anger,
61 and may exhibit socially inappropriate labile and aggressive behaviors, or may exhibit socially
62 inappropriate emotional detachment and avoidance behaviors;

63 WHEREAS, these negative coping behaviors and dysfunctional emotions limit a
64 person's capacity to form healthy stable relationships, foster social capital, learn from
65 experiences and mistakes, set and achieve short and long-term goals, and succeed in
66 educational and vocational pursuits;

67 WHEREAS, in addition to the above negative outcomes, children and adults are more
68 likely to attempt to self medicate trauma-related "fight-flight-or-freeze" anxiety and emotional
69 dysfunction by using available substances such as tobacco, alcohol, prescription medications,
70 and street drugs, including heroin, methamphetamine, cocaine, and cannabis;

71 WHEREAS, because of the cumulative adverse effects of the above negative outcomes
72 on their physical health and emotional and cognitive capabilities, children and adults affected
73 by severe traumatic events, despite their sincere and best efforts to succeed in life, are more
74 likely to:

- 75 1. perform poorly in school and other academic pursuits;
- 76 2. struggle with work performance and sustainable employment;
- 77 3. become chronically unemployed as adults, resulting in financial stress, reduced
78 quality of life, and increased risk of experiencing long-term disability, homelessness, and other
79 personal and family traumatic experiences;
- 80 4. become dependent on and addicted to tobacco, alcohol, prescription medications,

81 illicit drugs, and other substances;

82 5. become directly engaged with law enforcement and the criminal justice system;

83 6. suffer from significant mental illness including depression, psychosis, and severe
84 anxiety leading to suicides and attempted suicides that otherwise would not have occurred;

85 7. suffer from serious physical health problems with poor long-term outcomes that
86 otherwise would not have occurred;

87 8. engage in high-risk sexual behaviors as adolescents and adults, including onset of
88 sexual activity at an early age and multiple sexual partners, resulting in increased risks of
89 adolescent pregnancy and paternity, other unintended pregnancies, and sexually transmitted
90 diseases;

91 9. experience significant problems and failures in marriage and other intimate partner
92 relationships;

93 10. become victims or perpetrators of intimate partner violence as adults;

94 11. struggle, despite their sincere efforts, to provide a stable and nurturing environment
95 for their current and future children, resulting in increased likelihood of intergenerational
96 trauma and intergenerational poverty; and

97 12. face a life expectancy shortened by as many as 20 years when compared to average
98 life expectancy for adults who did not experience severe trauma as children;

99 WHEREAS, with an increase in understanding about the impacts of trauma has come
100 the development of evidence-based questionnaires that identify behaviors and health-related
101 disorders in children and adults that can be indicative of possible trauma-related exposures;

102 WHEREAS, using these questionnaires can provide the opportunity to identify and
103 refer a child or adult for appropriate additional evaluation and treatment;

104 WHEREAS, the mental health profession can effectively diagnose and treat
105 trauma-related disorders following evidence-based approaches that have been proven to be
106 successful;

107 WHEREAS, one example of a well-studied, highly effective and widely available

108 therapy is trauma-focused cognitive behavior therapy;

109 WHEREAS, early childhood offers an important window of elevated opportunity to
110 prevent, treat, and heal the impacts of adverse childhood experiences and toxic stress on a
111 child's brain and body;

112 WHEREAS, a critical factor in buffering a child from the negative effects of toxic
113 stress and adverse childhood experiences is the existence of at least one stable, supportive
114 relationship between the child and a nurturing adult;

115 WHEREAS, with the increase in scientific understanding and ability to identify,
116 prevent, and treat trauma-related disorders, there is great hope for thousands of Utah children
117 and adults to begin healing from the negative effects of adverse childhood experiences, develop
118 resiliency, and have brighter, more productive futures than was previously possible; and

119 WHEREAS, in order to maximize the potential for positive outcomes of
120 evidence-based interventions in the treatment of severe trauma, it is imperative that employees
121 of the state of Utah and other people who interface directly with vulnerable children and adults
122 become informed regarding the effects of trauma on the human brain and available screening
123 and assessment tools and treatment interventions that lead to increased resiliency in children
124 and adults who struggle in life as the result of trauma-related disorders:

125 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the
126 Governor concurring therein, encourages all officers, agencies, and employees of the state of
127 Utah whose responsibilities include working with vulnerable children and adults, such as the
128 Utah State Board of Education, the Utah Department of Human Services, the Department of
129 Workforce Services, the Administrative Office of the Courts, and the Utah Department of
130 Corrections, to:

131 1. become informed regarding well-documented detrimental short-term and long-term
132 impacts to children and adults from serious traumatic childhood experiences as outlined above;
133 and

134 2. implement evidence-based interventions and practices that are proven to be

135 successful in developing resiliency in children and adults currently suffering from
136 trauma-related disorders to help them recover from their trauma and function at their full
137 capacity and potential in school, the workplace, and community, family, and interpersonal
138 relationships.

139 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Utah Board
140 of Education, the Utah Department of Human Services, the Department of Workforce Services,
141 the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Utah Department of Corrections, and all political
142 subdivisions of the state of Utah.

143 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to all nonprofit
144 agencies and other entities that contract with the state of Utah to provide services to vulnerable
145 children and adults.