INTRODUCED

February 2, 2016

**H. 4816**

Introduced by Rep. J.E. Smith

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Read the first time February 2, 2016.

**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 53‑3‑205 SO AS TO DESIGNATE JUNE TWENTY‑SEVENTH OF EACH YEAR AS SOUTH CAROLINA POST‑TRAUMATIC STRESS INJURY (PTSI) AWARENESS DAY.

Whereas, the brave men and women who proudly serve the United States Armed Forces by risking their lives to protect our nation and its ideals deserve the investment of all possible resources to their long‑term psychological, physical and emotional health; and

Whereas, the acronym PTSI refers to the term post‑traumatic stress injury; and

Whereas, post‑traumatic stress injury occurs after a person has experienced severe trauma and can result from the stress produced in combat, as well as in car accidents, plane crashes, bombings, child abuse or natural disaster; and

Whereas, post‑traumatic stress injuries can be characterized by numerous symptoms including: flashbacks, avoidance, hyper‑vigilance, depression, anxiety, insomnia, fatigue, and thoughts of suicide; and

Whereas, more than two million American service men and women have been deployed by the United States Armed Forces since September 11, 2001; and

Whereas, many members of the United States Armed Forces deploy more than once, increasing the risk of developing post‑traumatic stress injuries; and

Whereas, the reference to the word “disorder” when describing a post‑traumatic stress injury may imply negative connotation; and

Whereas, this negative connotation can discourage United States Armed Forces service men and women, as well as other citizens who experience post‑traumatic stress injuries from seeking and receiving aid; and

Whereas, the establishment of Post‑Traumatic Stress Injury Awareness Day would raise public awareness of the injury; and

Whereas, the establishment of Post‑traumatic Stress Injury Awareness Day also would increase awareness of the need to develop effective treatments and aid the effort to eliminate any negative stigmas associated with post‑traumatic stress injuries. Now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Chapter 3, Title 53 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 53‑3‑205. June twenty‑seventh of each year is designated as South Carolina Post‑Traumatic Stress Injury (PTSI) Awareness Day.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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