

1 SR66
2 184336-1
3 By Senator Ward
4 RFD: Rules
5 First Read: 04-APR-17

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ENCOURAGING THE REDUCTION OF THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES IN JAILS.

WHEREAS, counties routinely provide treatment services to the estimated 2 million people with serious mental illnesses booked into jail each year; and

WHEREAS, prevalence rates of serious mental illnesses in jails are three to six times higher than for the general public; and

WHEREAS, almost three-quarters of adults with serious mental illnesses in jails have co-occurring substance use disorders; and

WHEREAS, adults with mental illnesses tend to stay longer in jail and, upon release, are at a higher risk of recidivism than people without these disorders; and

WHEREAS, county jails spend two to three times more on adults with mental illnesses that require interventions compared to those without these treatment needs; and

WHEREAS, without the appropriate treatment and services, people with mental illnesses continue to cycle

1 through the criminal justice system, often resulting in tragic
2 outcomes for these individuals and their families; and

3 WHEREAS, all counties throughout the state can take
4 pride in their responsibility to protect and enhance the
5 health, welfare, and safety of its residents in efficient and
6 cost-effective ways; and

7 WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of Alabama has
8 passed legislation, created committees and task forces to
9 assist with the prison reform effort; and

10 WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of Alabama
11 encourages county partnerships in Alabama through the Stepping
12 Up initiative, the National Association of Counties, the
13 Council of State Governments Justice Center, and the American
14 Psychiatric Association Foundation who are all encouraging
15 public, private, and nonprofit partners to reduce the number
16 of people with mental illnesses in jails; now therefore,

17 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE LEGISLATURE OF
18 ALABAMA, That we acknowledge April 5, 2017, as Stepping Up Day
19 in Alabama and we do hereby encourage the counties throughout
20 Alabama to sign on to the Call to Action to reduce the number
21 of people with mental illnesses in our county jails, and to
22 commit to sharing lessons learned with other counties in the
23 state and across the country to support a national initiative
24 and encourage all county officials, employees, and residents
25 to participate in the Stepping Up Initiative.