

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 261

Designating the month of October 2011 as “National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 13, 2011

Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. PORTMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Designating the month of October 2011 as “National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month”.

Whereas over-the-counter and prescription medicines approved by the Food and Drug Administration have been determined to be safe and effective when used properly;

Whereas the abuse of such medicines can be extremely dangerous and produce serious side effects;

Whereas according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, the nonmedical use of prescription drugs has risen, with 2.5 percent of the population engaging in nonmedical use of prescription drugs in 2008

and 2.8 percent of the population engaging in such use in 2009;

Whereas the 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health illustrates that the abuse of prescription medications such as pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, and sedatives is second only to marijuana, the most commonly abused illegal drug in the United States;

Whereas the 2010 Monitoring the Future survey, funded by the National Institutes of Health, indicates that approximately 5 percent of teenagers in the United States report having abused an over-the-counter cough medicine to get high, and prescription and over-the-counter drugs account for 8 of the 14 most frequently abused drugs by students in grade 12;

Whereas the 2010 Monitoring the Future survey also indicates that the intentional abuse of cough medicine among students in grades 8, 10, and 12 is at 3.2 percent, 5.1 percent, and 6.6 percent, respectively;

Whereas according to research from The Partnership at DrugFree.org, more than one-third of teenagers mistakenly believe that taking prescription drugs, even if not prescribed by a doctor, is much safer than using street drugs;

Whereas the lack of understanding by teenagers and parents of the potential harm of such powerful medicines makes it more critical than ever to raise public awareness about the dangers of the abuse of such drugs;

Whereas when prescription drugs are abused, such drugs are most often obtained through friends and relatives;

Whereas parents should be aware that the Internet gives teenagers access to websites that promote the abuse of medicines;

Whereas the designation of “National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month” promotes the message that over-the-counter and prescription medicines should be taken only as labeled or prescribed, and such medicines can have serious or life-threatening consequences when used to get high or in large doses;

Whereas the designation of “National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month” will encourage parents to educate themselves about the problem of abuse of over-the-counter and prescription medicines, and talk to their teens about all types of substance abuse;

Whereas observance of “National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month” should be encouraged at the national, State, and local levels to increase awareness of the abuse of medicines;

Whereas educational tools, training programs, and strategies have been developed by the national organization that represents 5,000 anti-drug coalitions nationwide and the association representing makers of over-the-counter medicines, in order to help local coalitions demonstrate the best ways to engage and educate parents and grandparents, teachers, law enforcement officials, doctors, other healthcare professionals, and retailers about the potential harms of cough medicine abuse;

Whereas a partnership of nonprofit associations specializing in raising media awareness about substance abuse and organizations that represent the leading makers of over-the-counter drugs have developed a nationwide prevention

campaign that utilizes research-based educational advertisements, public relations and news media, and the Internet to inform parents about the negative teen behavior of intentional abuse of medicines, in order to empower parents to effectively communicate with their children about this dangerous trend and to take necessary steps to safeguard prescription and over-the-counter medicines in their homes; and

Whereas educating the public on the dangers of medicine abuse and promoting prevention of medicine abuse are critical components of what must be a multi-pronged effort to curb prescription and over-the-counter medicine abuse: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates the month of October 2011 as
3 “National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month”; and

4 (2) urges communities to carry out appropriate
5 programs and activities to educate parents and
6 youth about the potential dangers associated with
7 medicine abuse.

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