



Representatives Bride Rose Sweeney & Gary Click

Sponsor Testimony: House Bill 591 (Designate Eating Disorders Awareness Week)
House Health Committee
May 17, 2022

Chairman Lipps, Vice-Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Liston, and Members of the Health Committee, thank you for providing me and Rep. Click the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on House Bill 591, which brings awareness to eating disorders by designating the last week of February as “Eating Disorders Awareness Week.”

Eating Disorders Awareness Week is an annual campaign by the National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) to shine a light on the realities of eating disorders and to provide hope, support, and visibility to the many individuals and families affected by them. These disorders affect people of all backgrounds and include Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, and Binge Eating Disorder.

According to NEDA, **95 percent of people with eating disorders are between the ages 12 and 25**—primarily children and teens. It has become abundantly clear that social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok contribute to negative mental health, body image, and eating disorders, especially among teenage girls. Too often overlooked and misunderstood, eating disorders have **the second-highest risk of death of any mental illness (next to opioid addiction)** per 2021 data. This data further emphasizes the importance of combating this deadly disorder.

Chairman Lipps, Vice-Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Liston, and Members of the Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning on HB 591 alongside Rep. Sweeney. Teens face increasing challenges every year and we cannot sit idly by allowing them to fend for themselves. This is why Rep. Sweeney and I have reached across the aisle to draw focus and attention to our hurting youth.

As you know, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly worsened America’s mental health crisis. In the United States, it’s estimated that more than twenty million women and ten million men have a clinically significant eating disorder. However, by increasing access to resources and bettering the public’s understanding of the causes, dangers, and treatments of eating disorders, we can encourage early detection and intervention of these mental illnesses, and take steps toward saving and improving lives.

Therefore, awareness is an important place to start at the state level. This bill is an essential first step in combating this issue because it codifies “Eating Disorder Awareness Week” to be observed annually on the last week of February. I believe that this recognition is a fitting tribute to our constituents who struggle with eating disorders every day. Increased awareness on critical topics like this will help bring solutions one step closer to hurting families in crisis.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 591. We would be happy to answer any questions from the committee.