



2023 South Dakota Legislature

House Concurrent Resolution 6002

Introduced by: **Representatives** Rehfeldt, Deutsch, Healy, Ernie Otten, and Stevens and **Senators** Reed, Schoenfish, Tobin, and Wheeler at the request of the Study Committee on Juvenile Justice

1 **A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, To encourage the Executive Board of the Legislature**
2 **to continue researching childhood mental health and mental health services**
3 **available to children in this state.**

4 WHEREAS, mental health issues in South Dakota constitute a public health crisis; and

5 WHEREAS, communities, families, and individuals face a broad spectrum of mental health
6 challenges on a daily basis; and

7 WHEREAS, mental health is vital to the wellbeing of children in this state; and

8 WHEREAS, children with trauma or adverse childhood experiences have a higher likelihood
9 of entering the juvenile justice system and re-entering the juvenile justice system; and

10 WHEREAS, law enforcement officials in South Dakota have seen an increase in offenses
11 for children under ten years old; and

12 WHEREAS, suicide is the leading cause of death for individuals aged ten to nineteen in
13 South Dakota; and

14 WHEREAS, preventative medicine, early intervention, and family support services are
15 essential in addressing childhood mental health issues; and

16 WHEREAS, there is a critical need for more mental health providers and school counselors
17 in this state; and

18 WHEREAS, due to the lack of mental health providers in this state, individuals in need of
19 services wait up to four-to-six weeks to receive treatment and care, with even greater wait
20 times for pediatric psychiatry services; and

1 WHEREAS, due to the employment shortages in the mental health sector, juvenile justice
2 reform efforts are being dramatically impacted; and

3 WHEREAS, there is a need for mental health services collaboration among state agencies,
4 non-profit groups, and communities to reduce overlapping services and address areas where
5 no services are currently being provided; and

6 WHEREAS, mental health has broadly improved over the last decade, but no group has
7 studied childhood mental health issues specifically;

8 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the House of Representatives of the Ninety-
9 Eighth Legislature of the State of South Dakota, the Senate concurring therein, that it is
10 recommended to the Executive Board of the Legislature that further research is conducted in
11 the area of childhood mental health and the ways in which childhood mental health services
12 can be improved and broadened across South Dakota.