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## **SOUTH DAKOTA PROCLAIMS JUNE AS POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS INJURY AWARENESS MONTH - RAISING AWARENESS, BREAKING STIGMA, AND SUPPORTING HEALING ACROSS THE STATE**

**PIERRE, S.D.** - In recognition of the invisible wounds carried by many of our veterans, service members, first responders, and survivors of trauma, South Dakota Governor Larry Rhoden has officially proclaimed the month of June as Post-Traumatic Stress Injury Awareness Month (PTSIA).

The proclamation emphasizes the importance of acknowledging and addressing the lasting effects of trauma, and aims to foster a culture of compassion, understanding, and healing. By shifting the conversation from “disorder” to “injury,” the state seeks to help reduce stigma and remind individuals that healing is not only possible—but encouraged and supported.

“This proclamation is more than a symbolic gesture—it’s a call to action,” said Governor Rhoden. “Post-traumatic stress injury can affect anyone, and we must ensure that every South Dakotan who has experienced trauma knows they are not alone. Together, we stand with our veterans, first responders, and all those on the path to recovery.”

The term “Post-Traumatic Stress Injury” has been increasingly embraced by veterans' groups and mental health professionals as a way to emphasize that the effects of trauma are injuries to the brain and soul—not signs of weakness or personal failure. Jeremiah Schneider, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, echoed the Governor’s message, urging all citizens to play a role in raising awareness and supporting healing.

“PTSIs are treatable, and recovery is real,” Secretary Schneider stated. “By fostering open dialogue, supporting access to care, and honoring the courage it takes to seek help, we can build a stronger, more resilient community for those who have sacrificed so much.”

Residents are encouraged to wear teal or black ribbons, symbols of PTSI awareness, and to check in with friends, loved ones, and colleagues who may be carrying invisible burdens.

For more information, resources, or to connect with support services, contact your local veterans service officer.

Together, South Dakota stands united in its message: healing is possible, and no one should walk that journey alone.