ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 155

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED SEPTEMBER 17, 2026

Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman HEATHER SIMMONS
District 3 (Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem)

SYNOPSIS
Recognizes loneliness as public health crisis.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As introduced.

AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION recognizing loneliness as a public health crisis in New Jersey.

WHEREAS, Loneliness is a subjective experience that results from perceived isolation or inadequate meaningful connections, where inadequate refers to the discrepancy or unmet need between an individual's preferred and actual experience; and

WHEREAS, Loneliness and isolation increase the risk for individuals to develop mental health challenges in their lives, and lacking connection can increase the risk for premature death to levels comparable to smoking daily; and

WHEREAS, The United States Surgeon General declared a loneliness epidemic on May 3, 2023 due to an increase in the number of people experiencing loneliness and the adverse health effects that those individuals are prone to experience; and

WHEREAS, While the epidemic of loneliness and isolation is widespread and has profound consequences for our individual and collective health and well-being, there is an available solution to the problem: social connection; and

WHEREAS, Social connection is beneficial for individual health, improving the resilience of our communities, and decreasing the feeling of loneliness; and

WHEREAS, Evidence shows that increased connection can help reduce the risk of serious health conditions such as heart disease, stroke, dementia, and depression; and

WHEREAS, Communities where residents are more connected with one another fare better on several measures of population health, community safety, community resilience when natural disasters strike, prosperity, and civic engagement; and

WHEREAS, The physical health consequences of poor or insufficient connection include a 29 percent increased risk of heart disease, a 32 percent increased risk of stroke, and a 50 percent increased risk of developing dementia for older adults. Additionally, lacking social connection increases risk of premature death by more than 60 percent; and

WHEREAS, In adults, the risk of developing depression among people who report feeling lonely often is more than double that of people who rarely or never feel lonely; and

WHEREAS, In childhood, loneliness and isolation increases the risk of depression and anxiety both immediately and adulthood; and

WHEREAS, With more than one in five adults and more than one in three young adults living with a mental illness in the United States, addressing loneliness and isolation is critical in order to fully address the mental health crisis in New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, It is fitting to recognize the loneliness epidemic and its effects on the health of New Jerseyans throughout the State in effort to proactively take necessary action in curtailing its adverse public health outcomes; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED *by the Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. The Assembly of the State of New Jersey recognizes loneliness as a public health crisis that adversely affects the health of New Jerseyans throughout the State.

2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the Commissioner of Health.

STATEMENT

This resolution recognizes loneliness as a public health crisis. The United States Surgeon General declared a loneliness epidemic on May 3, 2023 due to an increase in the number of people experiencing loneliness and the adverse health effects that those individuals are prone to experience. Loneliness and isolation increase the risk for individuals to develop mental health challenges in their lives and to experience premature death.

While the epidemic of loneliness and isolation is widespread and has profound consequences for our individual and collective health and well-being, there is an available solution to the problem: social connection. Social connection is beneficial for individual health, improving the resilience of our communities, and decreasing the feeling of loneliness. With more than one in five adults and more than one in three young adults living with a mental illness in the United States, addressing loneliness and isolation is critical in order to fully address the mental health crisis in New Jersey. It is fitting to recognize the loneliness epidemic and its effects on the health of New Jerseyans throughout the State in effort to proactively take necessary action in curtailing its adverse public health outcomes.