



Rep. Tom Emmer on the Securing Facilities for Mental Health Services Act on GMA3

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HOST:

Tom Emmer good to see you and thanks a lot for being with us today.

REP. TOM EMMER:

Great to be with both of you. DeMarco, Eva, thanks for having me this afternoon.

HOST:

Of course. So how would this bill expand mental health care on a national level?

REP. TOM EMMER:

Well first we have to just put it in context for your viewers. We have a mental health crisis in this country and we have a shortage of care facilities, beds if you will, for people with mental health challenges and in fact the NIH in a 2021 study DeMarco said that we are off by about 40% and if what this bill does is it would allow mental health hospitals and other facilities to apply for federal hospital mortgage insurance. In 1968 Congress passed the Fair Housing Act which had section 242 in it which to incent people to build hospitals and expand hospitals they they created this federal hospital mortgage insurance but they excluded mental health facilities and what we're trying to do is correct that because we've got this severe shortage and the longer we don't deal with it you probably know we're pushing people with serious mental health issues into homeless centers in the hospital emergency rooms and worse yet into our jails.

HOST:

So the big point of this bill is to create more beds because you say there's a bed shortage when it comes to these mental health hospitals. How does that impact this mental health crisis that we're seeing?

REP. TOM EMMER:

Well if you think about it when when you're sending someone who has a significant mental health crisis back out onto the street if they were initially seen in an emergency room and we're sending them back out of the street it's just a matter of time before they harm themselves or perhaps worse yet others and they may end up in the the legal system. We need to treat the condition this is no different than having a broken leg. People have mental health challenges that we can treat and we want to be able to treat them in a extended setting right inpatient mental health facilities so that we can return them to productive members of society. I think that should be everyone's goal.



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