

By Senator Burgess

20-00472-22

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Senate Memorial

A memorial to the Congress of the United States, urging Congress to recognize the epidemic of suicide among veterans and to fully fund suicide prevention efforts of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

WHEREAS, according to the 2020 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report published by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, there was an average of 17.6 veteran suicides per day in 2018, totaling 6,435 veteran suicides that year, and

WHEREAS, the department has found that veterans who die by suicide are more likely than the civilian population to have experienced sleep disorders, chronic pain, or traumatic brain injuries or to have received diagnoses of mental health conditions such as posttraumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder, personality disorder, substance use disorder, schizophrenia, depression, and anxiety, and

WHEREAS, some veterans have reported difficulty in transitioning to civilian employment, as their highly developed skills obtained during military service may not translate to higher level civilian jobs, and the resulting economic struggles, which may include unemployment, poverty, and homelessness, are shown to be risk factors for veteran suicide, and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs' Veteran Crisis Line is the world's largest provider of crisis call, text, and chat services for veterans, receiving

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30 approximately 650,000 calls per year, and

31 WHEREAS, the department has made significant progress in
32 the area of suicide prevention through clinical research, the
33 development and testing of evidence-based psychotherapy methods
34 and medications, and behavioral, complementary, and alternative
35 approaches to treating veterans with posttraumatic stress
36 disorder and other mental health conditions, and

37 WHEREAS, the department is partnered with hundreds of
38 national and local organizations and corporations, including
39 veterans service organizations, professional sports teams, and
40 major employers, in order to raise awareness of its suicide
41 prevention resources and to educate the public about supporting
42 veterans and servicemembers in their communities, and

43 WHEREAS, although RAND Corporation studies have found that
44 the United States Department of Veterans Affairs outperforms
45 other systems in the area of mental health care, the rising
46 trend in veteran suicides continues to plague the men and women
47 who selflessly served in the United States Armed Forces and
48 devastate their families, friends, and loved ones, NOW,
49 THEREFORE,

50
51 Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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53 That the Congress of the United States is urged to
54 recognize the current crisis of veteran suicide and to fully
55 fund suicide prevention efforts undertaken by the United States
56 Department of Veterans Affairs.

57 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
58 dispatched to the President of the United States, to the

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59 President of the United States Senate, to the Speaker of the
60 United States House of Representatives, and to each member of
61 the Florida delegation to the United States Congress.