

**The Florida Senate**  
**COMMITTEE MEETING EXPANDED AGENDA**

**MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, SPACE, AND  
 DOMESTIC SECURITY**

**Senator Wright, Chair**  
**Senator Harrell, Vice Chair**

**MEETING DATE:** Tuesday, November 2, 2021  
**TIME:** 3:30—6:00 p.m.  
**PLACE:** *Mallory Horne Committee Room, 37 Senate Building*

**MEMBERS:** Senator Wright, Chair; Senator Harrell, Vice Chair; Senators Burgess, Cruz, Gibson, Rodriguez, and Torres

TAB	BILL NO. and INTRODUCER	BILL DESCRIPTION and SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIONS	COMMITTEE ACTION
1	Presentation by Sheriff Bob Gualtieri, Sheriff of Pinellas County, on security issues		Presented
2	Presentation by Chief Richard M. Clements, Chief of Police, Miami Beach Police Department, on security issues		Presented
3	Presentation by Major General James S. Hartsell and Lauren Stentz, Florida Department of Veterans Affairs, on available mental health and suicide prevention services		Presented
Other Related Meeting Documents			

The Florida Senate

**APPEARANCE RECORD**

11/2/21  
Meeting Date

Deliver both copies of this form to  
Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

Bill Number or Topic

Military + Veterans Affairs  
Committee

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Name Sheriff Bob Gualtieri Phone 727-582-6200

Address Do Box 2500 Email rgualtieri@pcsonet.com  
Street

Largo FL 33779  
City State Zip

Speaking:  For  Against  Information **OR** Waive Speaking:  In Support  Against

**PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

I am appearing without compensation or sponsorship.

I am a registered lobbyist, representing:

I am not a lobbyist, but received something of value for my appearance (travel, meals, lodging, etc.), sponsored by:

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The Florida Senate

APPEARANCE RECORD

Nov 2 2021

Meeting Date

N/A

Bill Number or Topic

Senate Military/Vet

Deliver both copies of this form to Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

N/A

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Committee / Space / Domestic Security

Name

Richard Clemens / Chief

Phone

305 335 6497

Address

1100 Washington Ave

Email

rickclemens@miamiblackfl.gov

Street

Miami Beach FL

33139

City

State

Zip

Speaking:

For

Against

Information

OR

Waive Speaking:

In Support

Against

Speaking upon request

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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

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*Honoring those who served U.S.*

**FLORIDA SENATE MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, SPACE, AND DOMESTIC  
SECURITY**

**NOVEMBER 2021**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JAMES S. HARTSELL, MajGen, USMC (Ret.)**

**[WWW.FLORIDAVETS.ORG](http://WWW.FLORIDAVETS.ORG)**

# FLORIDA VETERAN MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

**Lauren A. Stentz, M.S.**  
Suicide Prevention and Research Specialist  
Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs  
The Capitol, Suite 2105  
StentzL@FDVA.STATE.FL.US

# RISK FACTORS FOR DEATH BY SUICIDE AMONG VETERANS

**There is no single cause of suicide. Suicide is often the result of a complex interaction of risk and protective factors at the individual, community, and societal levels.**

## Empirically-supported risk factors:

- “Perceived Burdensomeness” – the idea that one is a burden on those around them.
- “Thwarted Belongingness” - the feeling that one is not a valued member of a community; loneliness.
- “Acquired Capability” – the ability to carry out the act of suicide.
- Hopelessness
- Psychopathology, prior attempts, substance abuse, significant life stressors.

# VETERAN SUICIDE RATES IN FLORIDA

## VA's 2021 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report

Data: 2005-2019

**Florida Veteran Suicide Deaths, 2018**

<i>Sex</i>	<i>Veteran Suicides</i>
Total	577
Male	557
Female	20

**Florida Veteran Suicide Deaths, 2019**

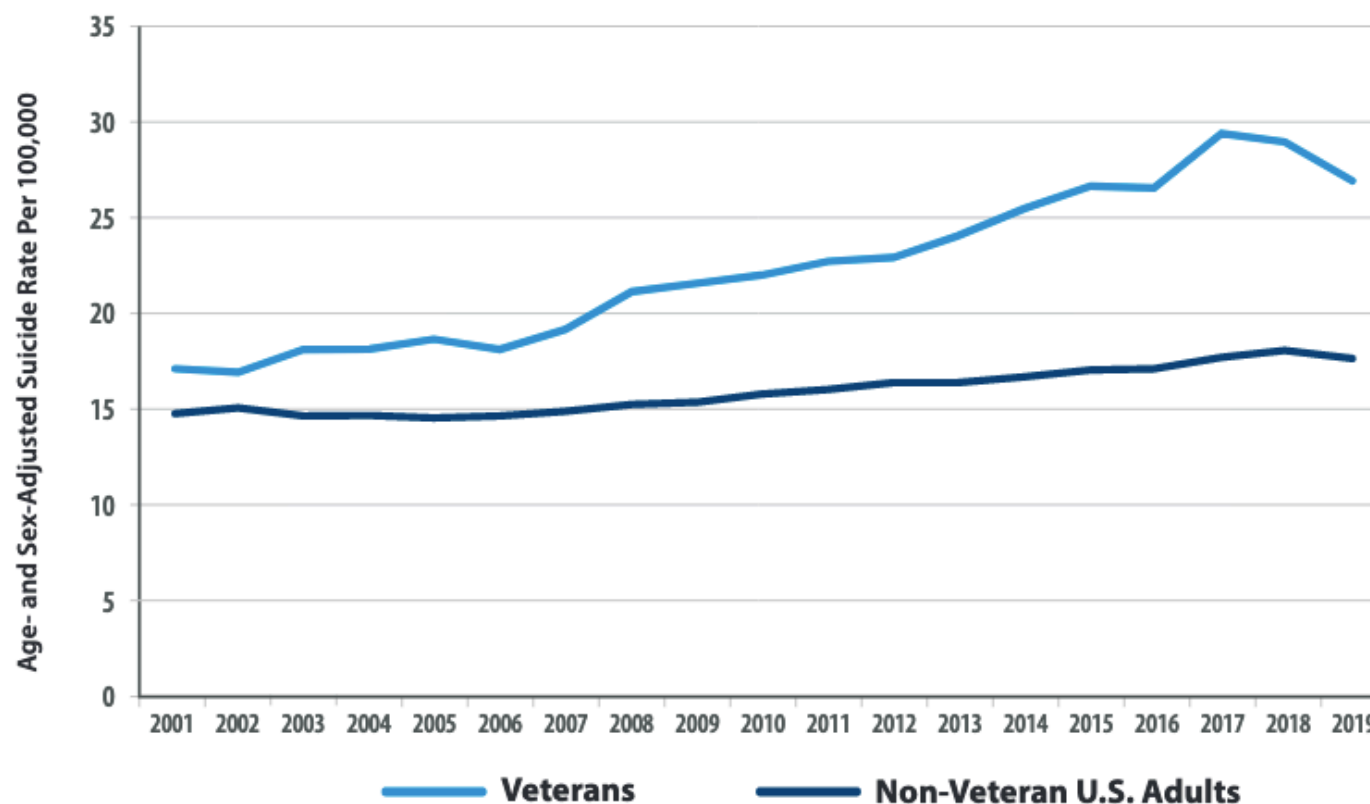
<i>Sex</i>	<i>Veteran Suicides</i>
Total	553
Male	524
Female	29

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Florida Veteran Suicides</i>	<i>National Veteran Suicides</i>	<i>Florida Veteran Suicide Rate</i>	<i>National Veteran Suicide Rate</i>
Total	553	6,261	35.7	31.6
18-34	49	828	42.2	44.4
35-54	106	1,663	29.9	32.8
55-74	236	2,407	36.4	28.8
75+	160	1,336	37.3	29.6

Reference: VA's Florida Veteran Suicide Data Sheet, 2019

# NATIONAL VETERAN SUICIDE RATES

**Figure 3: Age- and Sex-Adjusted Suicide Rates, Veterans and Non-Veteran U.S. Adults, 2001–2019**



Reference: VA's 2021 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report



# CURRENT DATA TRENDS IN MENTAL HEALTH

**Current VA Reports have published findings up to 2019, and for several months in 2020**

## **VA's 2018 and 2019 Veteran Suicide Data:**

- Documented a 7.2% decreased in Veteran suicides from 2018-2019
  - **Caveat: Incomplete Data**

## **VA's 2020 Veteran Suicide Data:**

- Noted an increase in suicidal ideation among some Veteran populations

## **Since the start of 2020, we have documented increases in:**

- The suicide rate among active-duty troops (DoD's Annual Suicide Report)
- Crisis outreach to the Veteran Crisis Line
  - 7% Increase in calls, 40% increase in online chats, 98% increase in texts
- Number of crisis and suicide prevention calls to the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay

# CURRENT VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION EFFORTS IN FLORIDA

- **Florida Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families**
- **VA's Safety Planning App**

## WHAT IS A SAFETY PLAN?

A safety plan is a prioritized written list of coping strategies and sources of support that Veterans who have been deemed to be at high risk for suicide can use before or during a crisis. The plan is **brief, easy to read**, and in the **Veteran's own words**.



# FL GOVERNOR'S CHALLENGE TO PREVENT SUICIDE AMONG SERVICE MEMBERS, VETERANS, AND THEIR FAMILIES

- Objective: To help local leaders in community and state governments **work together to prevent suicide among Veterans**
- Specifically – To **develop an implementation plan** to prevent suicide among service members, Veterans, and their families that will advance the **VA's National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide** and incorporate evidence-based strategies from the **CDC's Preventing Suicide: A Technical package of Policy, Programs, and Practices**



# FL GOVERNOR'S CHALLENGE TO PREVENT SUICIDE AMONG SERVICE MEMBERS, VETERANS, AND THEIR FAMILIES

## State-Wide Veteran Suicide Prevention Training

\*Free, 30-minute, online training

<15 THINGS  
VETERANS  
WANT YOU TO KNOW

WE ASKED OUR  
VETERANS

MILITARY  
CULTURAL  
COMPETENCE

*Together, we can end Veteran suicide and SAVE lives.*

**FW**  
THE FIRE WATCH

**S** Look for Signs that a Veteran is in crisis  
**A** Ask if the Veteran is thinking of hurting himself  
**V** Validate the Veteran's experience  
**E** Expedite getting the Veteran help

**Signs of a  
Veteran  
in Crisis**

- Thinking about hurting or killing herself
- Looking for ways to kill himself
- Thinking about death, dying or suicide
- Self-destructive behavior

# WATCH STANDER TRAINING



**Active Duty Military or  
Military Veteran**

[JOIN NOW](#)



**Veteran Champion  
(Civilian)**

[JOIN NOW](#)



**Veteran Safe Place  
(Business/Organization)**

[MORE INFO](#)

## **Training Components:**

- 1) Training Introduction
- 2) 15 things Veterans Want You to Know
- 3) S.A.V.E Training (VA-developed training)
- 4) Resource Guide & Pledge

# WHAT FL CITIES, COUNTIES, AND CITIZENS CAN DO:

- Complete and promote the Watch Stander training
- When talking about suicide:
  - Don't say: ~~Commit Suicide~~
  - **Do say: “Die by suicide”** or “took his/her life”
  - Reasoning – The word “commit” is generally associated with crimes; “die by suicide” is preferred because it emphasizes the death and deemphasizes the judgment
- Engage with the FL Governor’s Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families
- Know the suicide prevention and crisis intervention resources in your area and don't be afraid to reach out WITH someone

# RESOURCES TO KNOW

- Veterans Crisis Line | 1 - 800 – 273 – TALK, press 1



- Florida Veterans Support Line: 1 - 844 - MYFLVET (693-5838)
- Crisis Center of Tampa Bay
- Local 211 resources
- Watch Stander Training: <https://www.thefirewatch.org/watch-standers>
- FDVA Website: <https://www.floridavets.org/>

# QUESTIONS?



## **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

**Lauren A. Stentz, M.S.**

Suicide Prevention and Research Specialist

Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

The Capitol, Suite 2105

StentzL@FDVA.STATE.FL.US



THE FLORIDA SENATE

APPEARANCE RECORD

(Deliver BOTH copies of this form to the Senator or Senate Professional Staff conducting the meeting)

2 November 2021

Meeting Date

Bill Number (if applicable)

Topic FDVA on available mental health and suicide prevention services

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Name James "Hammer" Hartsell, MajGen, USMC (Ret),

Job Title Executive Director

Address 400 S. Monroe Street Ste 2105

Phone 850-487-1533

Street

Tallahassee

FL

32399

Email HartsellJ@FDVA.State.FL.US

City

State

Zip

Speaking: [ ] For [ ] Against [x] Information

Waive Speaking: [ ] In Support [ ] Against (The Chair will read this information into the record.)

Representing Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

Appearing at request of Chair: [x] Yes [ ] No

Lobbyist registered with Legislature: [x] Yes [ ] No

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The Florida Senate

APPEARANCE RECORD

Women Veterans of Pa

2 NOV 2021

Meeting Date

Deliver both copies of this form to Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

Bill Number or Topic

Military/Veteran

Committee

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Name Ellsworth Williams

Phone 407 516 8398

Address 3810 West Kennedy Blvd

Email ellsworth@vetscounseling.net

Street

Tampa FL 33609

City

State

Zip

Speaking: [ ] For [ ] Against [x] Information OR Waive Speaking: [ ] In Support [ ] Against

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S-001 (08/10/2021)



**OK BUT IF YOU EVER  
GET INTO A REAL FIREFIGHT**



**FIND THE NEAREST MARINE  
AND GIVE HIM YOUR AMMO**



# CourtSmart Tag Report

**Room:** SB 37

**Case No.:**

**Type:**

**Caption:** Military and Veterans Affairs, Space and Domestic Security Committee **Judge:**

**Started:** 11/2/2021 3:30:58 PM

**Ends:** 11/2/2021 5:17:45 PM **Length:** 01:46:48

**3:30:58 PM** Meeting called to order by Chair Wright  
**3:31:08 PM** CAA Lois Graham calls the roll  
**3:31:22 PM** Quorum announced  
**3:31:33 PM** Pledge of Allegiance led by Senator Burgess  
**3:31:56 PM** Chair Wright with opening comments  
**3:32:51 PM** Tab 1 Presentation on Security Issues by Sheriff Bob Gualtieri, Sheriff of Pinellas County  
**3:32:55 PM** Sheriff Bob Gualtieri presents  
**3:43:30 PM** Senator Harrell with question  
**3:43:39 PM** Sheriff Gualtieri responds  
**3:46:14 PM** Senator Harrell with follow-up  
**3:46:22 PM** Sheriff Gualtieri responds  
**3:47:32 PM** Senator Gibson with question  
**3:47:42 PM** Sheriff Gualtieri responds  
**3:48:39 PM** Senator Gibson with follow-up  
**3:48:48 PM** Sheriff Gualtieri responds  
**3:49:54 PM** Senator Gibson with question  
**3:50:00 PM** Sheriff Gualtieri responds  
**3:52:20 PM** Senator Gibson with question  
**3:52:34 PM** Sheriff Gualtieri responds  
**3:57:47 PM** Chair Wright with comments  
**3:57:57 PM** Sheriff Gualtieri with comments  
**3:58:15 PM** Chair Wright with question  
**3:58:19 PM** Sheriff Gualtieri responds  
**3:58:35 PM** Chair Wright with comments  
**3:59:02 PM** Senator Torres with question  
**3:59:12 PM** Sheriff Gualtieri responds  
**4:03:03 PM** Senator Torres with follow-up  
**4:03:09 PM** Sheriff Gualtieri responds  
**4:04:43 PM** Chair Wright with comments  
**4:04:48 PM** Sheriff Gualtieri responds  
**4:05:00 PM** Chair Wright with comments  
**4:05:05 PM** Tab 2 Presentation on Security Issues by Chief Richard Clements, Chief of Police, Miami Beach Police Department  
**4:05:15 PM** Chief Clements presents  
**4:08:03 PM** Chief Clements presents  
**4:10:49 PM** Senator Harrell with comments/question  
**4:10:56 PM** Chief Clements responds  
**4:12:41 PM** Senator Gibson with question  
**4:12:49 PM** Chief Clements responds  
**4:14:27 PM** Senator Gibson with question  
**4:14:35 PM** Chief Clements responds

**4:16:18 PM** Senator Gibson with question  
**4:16:24 PM** Chief Clements responds  
**4:17:51 PM** Senator Torres with question  
**4:18:00 PM** Chief Clements responds  
**4:19:20 PM** Senator Torres with follow-up  
**4:19:26 PM** Chief Clements responds  
**4:20:50 PM** Senator Rodriguez with question  
**4:21:00 PM** Chief Clements responds  
**4:22:03 PM** Chair Wright with question  
**4:22:10 PM** Chief Clements responds  
**4:23:30 PM** Chair Wright with comments  
**4:23:38 PM** Chief Clements responds  
**4:23:44 PM** Tab 3 Presentation by Major General James S. Hartsell and Lauren Stentz, Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (FDVA) on available mental health and suicide prevention services  
**4:23:54 PM** Major General Hartsell, Executive Director, FDVA, presents  
**4:24:51 PM** Chair Wright with comments  
**4:25:03 PM** Major General Hartsell with comments  
**4:25:13 PM** Senator Burgess with comments  
**4:25:24 PM** Major General Hartsell presents  
**4:25:56 PM** Chair Wright with comments  
**4:26:11 PM** Major General Hartsell presents  
**4:32:49 PM** Lauren Stentz Suicide Prevention and Research Specialist (FDVA), presents  
**4:46:40 PM** Senator Gibson with question  
**4:46:57 PM** Ms. Stentz responds  
**4:48:22 PM** Senator Gibson with question  
**4:48:34 PM** Ms. Stentz responds  
**4:49:58 PM** Senator Gibson with question  
**4:50:02 PM** Ms. Stentz responds  
**4:50:17 PM** Senator Harrell with question  
**4:50:59 PM** Ms. Stentz responds  
**4:52:13 PM** Senator Harrell with follow-up  
**4:52:22 PM** Ms. Stentz responds  
**4:52:58 PM** Senator Rodriguez with question  
**4:53:25 PM** Ms. Stentz responds  
**4:54:48 PM** Senator Torres with question  
**4:55:48 PM** Ms. Stentz responds  
**4:57:58 PM** Senator Torres with follow-up  
**4:58:04 PM** Ms. Stentz responds  
**4:59:16 PM** Chair Wright with question  
**4:59:38 PM** Ms. Stentz responds  
**5:00:20 PM** Major General Hartsell with comments  
**5:03:21 PM** Chair Wright with comments  
**5:03:55 PM** Major General Hartsell with comments  
**5:04:01 PM** Ms. Stentz with comments  
**5:04:09 PM** Major General Hartsell with comments  
**5:04:16 PM** Senator Burgess with comments  
**5:06:16 PM** Mr. Ellsworth Williams, Military Veteran, speaks  
**5:11:02 PM** Chair Wright with comments  
**5:11:13 PM** Senator Burgess with question  
**5:11:22 PM** Chair Wight with comments  
**5:11:30 PM** Senator Burgess with comments  
**5:11:58 PM** Mr. Williams with comments

**5:12:24 PM** Senator Gibson with comments  
**5:12:49 PM** Mr. Williams with comments  
**5:13:36 PM** Senator Harrell with comments  
**5:13:54 PM** Senator Gibson with question  
**5:14:27 PM** Major General Hartsell responds  
**5:15:51 PM** Ms. Stentz with comments  
**5:16:05 PM** Major General Hartsell responds  
**5:16:57 PM** Senator Gibson with question  
**5:17:03 PM** Major General Hartsell responds  
**5:17:15 PM** Senator Rodriguez moves to adjourn  
**5:17:34 PM** Meeting adjourned