

HM 909

2020

## 1 House Memorial

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

7  
8 WHEREAS, according to the 2019 National Veteran Suicide  
9 Prevention Annual Report by the United States Department of  
10 Veterans Affairs, there were an average of 16.8 veteran suicide  
11 deaths per day in 2017, totaling an average of 6,139 veteran  
12 suicide deaths that year, and

13 WHEREAS, the department has found that veterans who die by  
14 suicide are more likely than the civilian population to have  
15 sleep disorders, traumatic brain injuries, or chronic pain  
16 diagnoses in addition to mental health conditions such as  
17 posttraumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder, personality  
18 disorder, substance use disorder, schizophrenia, depression, and  
19 anxiety, and

20 WHEREAS, some veterans have reported difficulty in  
21 transitioning to civilian employment, as their highly developed  
22 skills obtained in military service may not translate to higher-  
23 level civilian jobs, and the resulting economic disparities,  
24 unemployment, poverty, and homelessness among veterans are shown  
25 to be risk factors for veteran suicide, and

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26 WHEREAS, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs'  
27 Veteran Crisis Line is the world's largest provider of crisis  
28 call, text, and chat services for veterans, receiving over  
29 650,000 calls per year, and

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

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

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

48 THEREFORE,

49

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

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

56 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
57 dispatched to the President of the United States, to the  
58 President of the United States Senate, to the Speaker of the  
59 United States House of Representatives, and to each member of  
60 the Florida delegation to the United States Congress.