

115TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 3232

To amend title 10, United States Code, to establish a separation oath for members of the Armed Forces who are separating from military service.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 13, 2017

Mr. MAST (for himself, Mr. BABIN, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. CORREA, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Mr. BUDD, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, Mr. KIND, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. BARR, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. POSEY, Mr. BERGMAN, and Mr. BROWN of Maryland) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services

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## A BILL

To amend title 10, United States Code, to establish a separation oath for members of the Armed Forces who are separating from military service.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Oath of Exit Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF SEPARATION OATH FOR MEM-**  
2 **BERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.**

3 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-  
4 ings:

5 (1) The United States Armed Forces is the  
6 largest, all-volunteer military force in the world, yet  
7 less than one percent of the American population  
8 serves in the Armed Forces.

9 (2) Each branch of the Armed Forces (Army,  
10 Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard) in-  
11 stills in its members a sense of duty and obligation  
12 to the United States, their branch of service, and  
13 their comrades-in-arms.

14 (3) The Department of Veterans Affairs esti-  
15 mates that approximately 20 veterans of the Armed  
16 Forces commit suicide each day and a veteran's risk  
17 of suicide is 21 percent higher compared to an adult  
18 who has not served in the Armed Forces.

19 (4) The Department of Veterans Affairs is ag-  
20 gressively undertaking measures to prevent these  
21 tragic outcomes, yet suicide rates among veterans  
22 remain unacceptably high.

23 (5) Upon enlistment or appointment in the  
24 Armed Forces, a new member is obligated to take an  
25 oath of office or oath of enlistment.

1           (6) Most members of the Armed Forces view  
2           this oath not as an imposition, but as a promise that  
3           they are bound to fulfill.

4           (b) ESTABLISHMENT OF SEPARATION OATH.—Sec-  
5           tion 502 of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

6           (1) by redesignating subsection (b) as sub-  
7           section (c) and, in such subsection, by striking “The  
8           oath” and inserting “An oath established by this  
9           section”; and

10          (2) by inserting after subsection (a) the fol-  
11          lowing new subsection (b):

12          “(b) SEPARATION OATH.—Prior to retirement or  
13          other separation from the armed forces, other than sepa-  
14          ration pursuant to the sentence of a court-martial, a mem-  
15          ber of an armed force may take the following oath:

16                 “‘I, \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ , recog-  
17                 nizing that my oath to support and defend the Con-  
18                 stitution of the United States against all enemies,  
19                 foreign and domestic, has involved me and my fellow  
20                 members in experiences that few persons, other than  
21                 our peers, can understand, do solemnly swear (or af-  
22                 firm) to continue to be the keeper of my brothers-  
23                 and sisters-in-arms and protector of the United  
24                 States and the Constitution; to preserve the values  
25                 I have learned; to maintain my body and my mind;

1 and to not bring harm to myself without speaking to  
2 my fellow veterans first. I take this oath freely and  
3 without purpose of evasion, so help me God.’”.

4 (c) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—

5 (1) SECTION HEADING.—The heading of section  
6 502 of title 10, United States Code, is amended to  
7 read as follows:

8 **“§ 502. Enlistment oath and separation oath: who**  
9 **may administer”.**

10 (2) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections  
11 at the beginning of chapter 31 of title 10, United  
12 States Code, is amended by striking the item relat-  
13 ing to section 502 and inserting the following new  
14 item:

“502. Enlistment oath and separation oath: who may administer.”.

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