

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3195

To require the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to review the records of former members of the Armed Forces who die by suicide within one year of separation from the Armed Forces and to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit a report on the REACH VET program.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 15, 2020

Mr. CASSIDY (for himself and Mr. TESTER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to review the records of former members of the Armed Forces who die by suicide within one year of separation from the Armed Forces and to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit a report on the REACH VET program.

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 “Promoting Coordina-
5 tion for Veteran Suicide Prevention Act of 2020”.

1 **SEC. 2. REVIEW OF RECORDS OF FORMER MEMBERS OF**
2 **THE ARMED FORCES WHO DIE BY SUICIDE**
3 **WITHIN ONE YEAR OF SEPARATION FROM**
4 **THE ARMED FORCES.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense and the
6 Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall jointly review the
7 records of each former member of the Armed Forces who
8 died by suicide within one year of separation from the
9 Armed Forces during the five-year period preceding the
10 date of the enactment of this Act.

11 (b) ELEMENTS.—The review required by subsection
12 (a) with respect to a former member of the Armed Forces
13 shall include consideration of the following:

14 (1) If the Department of Defense had pre-
15 viously identified the former member as being at risk
16 for suicide and if that identification had been com-
17 municated to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

18 (2) What risk factors were present with respect
19 to the former member and how those risk factors
20 correlated to the circumstances of the death of the
21 former member.

22 (3) If the former member was eligible to receive
23 health care services from the Department of Vet-
24 erans Affairs.

25 (4) If the former member received health care
26 services, including mental health care services, from

1 a facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs, in-
2 cluding readjustment counseling services, following
3 separation from the Armed Forces.

4 (5) If the former member had received a mental
5 health waiver during service in the Armed Forces.

6 (6) The employment status, housing status,
7 marital status, age, rank within the Armed Forces
8 (such as enlisted or officer), and branch of service
9 within the Armed Forces of the former member.

10 (7) If support services, specified by the type of
11 service (such as employment, mental health, etc.),
12 were provided to the former member during their pe-
13 riod of separation from the Armed Forces,
14 disaggregated by—

15 (A) services furnished by the Department
16 of Defense, including through contracts;

17 (B) services furnished by the Department
18 of Veterans Affairs, including through con-
19 tracts; and

20 (C) services not covered under subpara-
21 graph (A) or (B).

22 (c) REPORT.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
24 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
25 retary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Af-

1 fairs shall jointly submit to the appropriate commit-
 2 tees of Congress an aggregated report on the results
 3 of the review conducted under subsection (a).

4 (2) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS
 5 DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term “appro-
 6 priate committees of Congress” means—

7 (A) The Committee on Armed Services and
 8 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Sen-
 9 ate; and

10 (B) The Committee on Armed Services and
 11 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the
 12 House of Representatives.

13 **SEC. 3. REPORT ON REACH VET PROGRAM OF DEPART-**
 14 **MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

15 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
 16 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
 17 erans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report on the
 18 REACH VET program.

19 (b) ELEMENTS.—The report required by subsection
 20 (a) shall include the following:

21 (1) An assessment of the impact of the REACH
 22 VET program on rates of suicide among veterans.

23 (2) An assessment of how limits within the
 24 REACH VET program, such as caps on the number
 25 of veterans who may be flagged as high risk, are ad-

1 justed for differing rates of suicide across the coun-
2 try.

3 (3) A detailed explanation, with evidence, for
4 why the conditions included in the model used by the
5 REACH VET program were chosen, including an
6 explanation as to why certain conditions, such as bi-
7 polar disorder II, were not included even though
8 they show a similar rate of risk for suicide as other
9 conditions that were included.

10 (4) An assessment of the feasibility of incor-
11 porating certain economic data held by the Veterans
12 Benefits Administration into the model used by the
13 REACH VET program, including financial data and
14 employment status, which research indicates may
15 have an impact on risk for suicide.

16 (c) REACH VET PROGRAM DEFINED.—In this sec-
17 tion, the term “REACH VET program” means the Recov-
18 ery Engagement and Coordination for Health—Veterans
19 Enhanced Treatment program of the Department of Vet-
20 erans Affairs.

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