

easily save more for retirement and fixes provisions what would have drastically increase taxes on military survivors and Gold Star families.

This is a good, bipartisan bill that represents Congress working together and will improve saving for retirement for all Americans.

I support the SECURE Act and voted in favor of the bill. Unfortunately, due to an error in the voting process my “Yea” vote was not officially recorded when the full House considered this bill on the floor.

HONORING THE 165TH ANNIVERSARY OF PROVIDENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN CHESAPEAKE, VIRGINIA

HON. ROBERT C. “BOBBY” SCOTT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 2019

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Providence United Church of Christ in Chesapeake, Virginia on its 165th anniversary.

Providence Church began as an informal group of slaves and freed blacks coming together to worship. In the beginning, they gathered for worship in parishioners’ homes and in public spaces. This time together was important for African-Americans because it provided spiritual support and a sense of community.

In 1854, Providence Church was officially organized by Reverend Scott. Under his leadership, the congregation met every Sunday and grew in size. As the number of parishioners increased, the church was able to purchase property on Railroad Road and build a church. The church was built in 1872 and was located in the city of South Norfolk, Virginia. South Norfolk later became Chesapeake, Virginia in 1963.

Providence Church was renamed Providence United Church of Christ in 1957 when they joined the United Church of Christ family. Twenty years after joining the denomination and more than 100 years after the church’s founding, Providence United Church of Christ expanded again in 1978. They were fortunate to build another addition in the form of an educational wing in 2003. Today many of their ministries take place in this new space.

Over the last 165 years, Providence United Church of Christ has continued to be a leader in the Hampton Roads community. The church serves the community through several ministries including the Christian Education Ministry, Senior Citizens Ministry and the Foodbank Ministry. Annual events include vacation bible schools, Kwanza celebrations, community confirmation classes, youth revivals and senior citizen celebrations. A unique feature of the church is that its congregation is divided into 12 tribes. These tribes provide a way for Providence United Church of Christ to reach different parts of the community.

It is impossible to commemorate the 165th anniversary of Providence United Church of Christ without recognizing its former pastors who helped build and grow this historic church—Reverends Scott, J. Jones, A. Harris, G.T. Hall, A.B. Jones, J.J. Faulk, J.R. Alston, R.R. Briggs, Ben E. Cox, V. Chambers, Clifton Thomas, Dr. Isaac McDonald, Dr. Samuel Varner, Dr. Alexander Jamison, Sr. and currently Dr. A. Jerome Danage, Sr.

Madam Speaker, as Providence United Church of Christ celebrates this historic milestone this weekend, its congregation can take pride in an inspiring 165 years of fellowship, worship and service. I would like to congratulate Reverend Dr. A. Jerome Danage, Sr. and all the members of the church’s congregation on this joyous occasion, and I wish them many more years full of growth, prosperity and service to our community.

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 2898 THE
“BUDDY CHECK WEEK ACT”

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 2019

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, yesterday, I introduced H.R. 2898, the “Buddy Check Week Act of 2019,” which provides support and training to organize outreach events and educate veterans on how to conduct peer wellness checks and recognize signs of problems in fellow veterans that indicate suicide risks.

The Buddy Check Week Act directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with veterans, non-profits that serve veterans, mental health experts, and members of the Armed Forces, to develop and implement collaborative education opportunities for veterans to learn how to conduct wellness checks.

A wellness check involves contacting veterans who may be demonstrating signs of having difficulty and making sure they receive visits to see how they are doing and provide support for any needs.

The VA will provide online or in-person training to individuals, as well as provide opportunities for Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) to learn how to: train individuals to conduct peer wellness checks, transfer phone calls to the Veterans Crisis Line, and be resilient when handling a veteran in crisis.

The bill inspired by the American Legion’s “Buddy Check National Week of Calling,” held March 11–16, 2019.

The American Legion unveiled this new initiative to connect past and present veterans and ensure that they receive the care they need.

A Buddy Check Week will provide the time, space, and resources needed to help these veterans through personal interaction and kindness.

This legislation will amplify the work of the American Legion and support efforts to conduct outreach to veterans across the nation.

Madam Speaker, veteran suicide is a pervasive and critical issue, threatening the lives of many of our bravest and most patriotic Americans.

Although, the VA has screening protocols designed to aid veterans and stage suicide interventions, some 6,000 veterans a year tropically fall through the cracks of this system, finding themselves without the necessary aid and resources that were promised to them by the VA and commit suicide.

Many Suicide Prevention Coordinators and offices specializing in veterans affairs report being overworked and unable to keep up with their many responsibilities.

On average, about 20 veterans die every day by suicide, and since 2017, 25 veterans

have taken their lives on the grounds of Veterans Affairs hospitals, including seven this year and at least four last month, actively seeking help from an unprepared agency before committing suicide.

It is long past time for the federal government to provide the necessary legislation to address the troubling uptick in veteran suicides and help improve suicide prevention and mental health resources at the VA.

To truly address this issue, we need to make sure that the VA and veterans aid organizations have the tools needed to serve every veteran that walks through their doors.

It is critically important that we provide training on the signs that a veteran may be in crisis and the needed make it easier to get them the help that they need.

I believe this bill is a step in the right direction toward making sure that happens.

Madam Speaker, it is unconscionable that a veteran will commit suicide every hour.

The fact that veterans make up just 20 percent of the male population, yet veterans make up close to 32 percent of all male suicides is shocking and must spur our action.

It does not have to be this way, Madam Speaker, and we can do something about it, starting with the passage of H.R. 2898, the “Buddy Check Week Act.”

CONGRATULATING THE CHRISTUS
SANTA ROSA HEALTH SYSTEM

HON. JOAQUIN CASTRO

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 2019

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Health System on its 150th anniversary year serving the health care needs of San Antonio and South Texas. Three Catholic Sisters left their families and native country of France 150 years ago in 1869, and traveled to San Antonio, Texas to answer a call to care for victims of a deadly cholera outbreak. This marked the beginnings of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio and the Santa Rosa Infirmary, which still serves the community today. A century and a half later, the infirmary, now known as CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Health System and The Children’s Hospital of San Antonio, has grown and expanded to meet the new health care needs of diverse populations throughout the south Texas region.

From those three founding Sisters, a network of hospitals and clinics has grown around the world, employing thousands of health care professionals who are still responding with compassion and love to Bishop Dubuis’ call 150 years ago.

In 2019, we celebrate the Congregation’s Sesquicentennial in CHRISTUS Health locations throughout Texas, Mexico, South America and the United States. And during this celebration, we remember the first ministry, where it all began—CHRISTUS Santa Rosa. CHRISTUS Health is now one of the top ten Catholic health systems in the United States and a leading provider of uncompensated care among not-for-profit health care systems.

I congratulate CHRISTUS Santa Rosa on its 150th anniversary and recognize its significant contribution to the state of Texas as a leader