



H.R. 4282

## Post-9/11 Veteran Suicide Prevention Counseling Act

### COSPONSORS

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### BACKGROUND

The most recent [VA National Suicide Data Report](#) highlights that the highest rate of increase of veteran suicides is among veterans aged 18-34, a rate which has nearly doubled since 2005. As of 2018, every veteran in that age group would have begun their service after 9/11.

According to the 2019 Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America [member survey](#), 65% of respondents personally know a post-9/11 veteran who has attempted suicide, and 59% personally know a veteran who has died by suicide. The majority of respondents reported service-connected clinical depression, post-traumatic stress, or other mental health injuries. Along with these risk factors for suicide, the respondents reported that the stigma of seeking help is the top reason for not getting the mental health care they need.

Suicide attempts can be [impulsive](#), and screening criteria are [not always](#) clinically effective, often relying on self-identification. Many suicide attempts involve little or no planning, and the time between suicidal ideation and attempted suicide could be a matter of minutes. This makes preventing veteran suicides incredibly difficult.

A more proactive approach is needed to combat the veteran suicide crisis.

The Post-9/11 Veteran Suicide Prevention Counseling Act would provide all post-9/11 veterans with a suicide prevention and lethal means counselling session as part of their first primary care visit with the VA.

The session would empower veterans to recognize suicide risk factors and, if appropriate, create a suicide prevention plan with their primary care provider, providing space for a more personal discussion that destigmatizes suicide.

### CONTACT

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