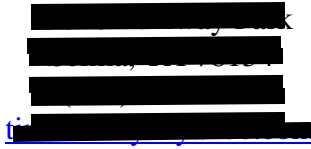


Dr. Tim Westley



July 22, 2019

Greetings President Donald J. Trump,

I pray this letter finds you in good health and strength and that you continue the good fight for our great nation! Less than a year ago, I had a good friend of mine, who is a Navy Veteran (I am an Army Veteran), call me and tell me his son, who was a Military Veteran as well, committed suicide. Most of America has heard of the 22 Veterans per day that commit suicide. I am writing to request commemorative legislation in the form of a Proclamation Request to the President of the United States, deeming September “National Veterans Suicide Prevention & Awareness Month”. In the month April, we had four Veterans commit suicide at V.A. facilities (one just five days after my original letter), two in Georgia, one in Texas and one in Ohio. Based on the latest VA National Suicide Data Report:

- There were more than 6,000 Veteran suicides each year from 2008 to 2016.
- In 2016, the suicide rate was 1.5 times greater for Veterans than for non-Veteran adults, after adjusting for age and gender.
- The suicide rate for Veterans ages 18–34 increased substantially, from 40.4suicide deaths per100,000 population in 2015 to 45 suicide deaths per 100,000 population in 2016.¹

Of course the most common data spoken about is the average of 22 Veterans per day that commit suicide. As a U.S. Army Veteran and one who has counseled many Veterans suffering from PTSD and Suicidal thoughts, I know the critical importance of awareness and having the right information available to provide to the Veterans in need.

¹ VA National Suicide Data Report, retrieved from https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/OMHSP_National_Suicide_Data_Report_2005-2016_508.pdf

This will be a month to highlight the risk factors and warning signs for suicide and provide information about VA mental health and suicide prevention resources in order to help start the conversation around Veteran mental health with their friends, family members, and communities. As Americans, we must stand with and for those who have stood on the battlefields for us, but are now in need of warriors to fight for them. For those desiring to collaborate and partner with others around the country, they are encouraged during this month and beyond to share resources with Veterans in their lives via the BeThereForVeterans.com webpage.

In 2018, V.A. designated September, Suicide Prevention Month. Today, I am requesting commemorative legislation in the form of a Proclamation Request to the President of the United States, declaring September as “National Veterans Suicide Prevention & Awareness Month”, with September 22 recognized as “Veterans Suicide Remembrance Day” in recognition of the average of 22 Veterans per day that have committed suicide and to stand as a reminder that we must keep fighting to get that number down to zero.

We must also remind our Veterans and their friends and loved ones that if any are in need and facing a crisis or having suicidal thoughts, they can call the Veterans Crisis Line for confidential support 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Call 800-273-8255 and press 1, chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat or text to 838255. Thank you in advance for attending to this matter and request. I look forward to your reply on this very important issue. May God continue to bless you in your efforts to keep America Great!

Respectfully,

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