

1 A JOINT MEMORIAL

2 REQUESTING THE VETERANS' SERVICES DEPARTMENT TO CONVENE A
3 TASK FORCE TO CONDUCT LISTENING SESSIONS IN VARIOUS
4 GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS OF THE STATE WITH VETERANS, VETERANS
5 ORGANIZATIONS, REPRESENTATIVES OF CITIES, COUNTIES, NATIVE
6 AMERICAN NATIONS, TRIBES AND PUEBLOS, AND THE WORKFORCE
7 SOLUTIONS DEPARTMENT TO ASSESS WHAT ADDITIONAL SUPPORT OR
8 POLICIES ARE NEEDED AND TO IMPLEMENT THEM TO HELP PREVENT
9 VETERAN SUICIDE IN NEW MEXICO.

10
11 WHEREAS, according to the United States department of
12 veterans affairs, in 2014, an average of twenty veterans died
13 from suicide each day; and

14 WHEREAS, in 2014, veterans constituted eight and
15 one-half percent of the United States population and, in that
16 year, veterans accounted for eighteen percent of all deaths
17 from suicide among adults in the United States; and

18 WHEREAS, there is a high incidence of suicide among
19 middle-aged and older veterans; and

20 WHEREAS, in 2014, sixty-five percent of all veteran
21 suicide victims were age fifty years or older; and

22 WHEREAS, a state-by-state study released by the United
23 States department of veterans affairs in 2017 concluded that
24 the veteran suicide rate in New Mexico is significantly
25 higher than the national veteran suicide rate and is the

1 fourth-highest veteran suicide rate in the nation; and

2 WHEREAS, screening and assessment processes have been
3 set up throughout the United States department of veterans
4 affairs system to assist in the identification of patients at
5 risk for suicide; and

6 WHEREAS, predictive modeling is used to determine which
7 veterans may be at the highest risk of suicide so that
8 providers can intervene early; and

9 WHEREAS, veterans at the highest risk are identified
10 before clinical signs of suicide are evident to save lives
11 before crises occur; and

12 WHEREAS, the United States department of veterans
13 affairs is implementing a multifaceted system to take a
14 proactive approach to combat veteran suicide, including
15 tele-mental health services, software applications, telephone
16 coaching and leveraging veteran centers and universities; and

17 WHEREAS, it is of critical importance to consider which
18 tools would be most effective to prevent veteran suicide in
19 New Mexico and to implement them;

20 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
21 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the veterans' services department be
22 requested to convene a task force to conduct listening
23 sessions in various geographic regions of the state with
24 veterans, veterans organizations, representatives of cities,
25 counties, Native American nations, tribes and pueblos and the

1 workforce solutions department to assess what additional
2 support or policies are needed to help prevent veteran
3 suicide in New Mexico and to implement them; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the veterans' services
5 department be requested to invite representatives from the
6 United States department of veterans affairs and New Mexico's
7 congressional delegation to participate in the task force;
8 and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be requested
10 to report its findings to the military and veterans' affairs
11 committee; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
13 transmitted to the secretary of veterans' services, the
14 secretary of workforce solutions, the secretary of Indian
15 affairs, the co-chairs of the military and veterans' affairs
16 committee, the United States department of veterans affairs
17 and New Mexico's congressional delegation. _____