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SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 1

**53RD LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2018**

INTRODUCED BY

Jeff Steinborn and Rodolpho "Rudy" S. Martinez

A JOINT MEMORIAL

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

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

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

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

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

5           WHEREAS, a state-by-state study released by the United  
6 States department of veterans affairs in 2017 concluded that  
7 the veteran suicide rate in New Mexico is significantly higher  
8 than the national veteran suicide rate and is the fourth-  
9 highest veteran suicide rate in the nation; and

10          WHEREAS, screening and assessment processes have been set  
11 up throughout the United States department of veterans affairs  
12 system to assist in the identification of patients at risk for  
13 suicide; and

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

17          WHEREAS, veterans at the highest risk are identified  
18 before clinical signs of suicide are evident to save lives  
19 before crises occur; and

20          WHEREAS, the United States department of veterans affairs  
21 is implementing a multifaceted system to take a proactive  
22 approach to combat veteran suicide, including tele-mental  
23 health services, software applications, telephone coaching and  
24 leveraging veteran centers and universities; and

25          WHEREAS, it is of critical importance to consider which

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1 tools would be most effective to prevent veteran suicide in New  
2 Mexico and to implement them;

3 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
4 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the veterans' services department be  
5 requested to convene a task force to conduct listening sessions  
6 in various geographic regions of the state with veterans,  
7 veterans organizations, representatives of cities, counties,  
8 Native American nations, tribes and pueblos and the workforce  
9 solutions department to assess what additional support or  
10 policies are needed to help prevent veteran suicide in New  
11 Mexico and to implement them; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the veterans' services  
13 department be requested to invite representatives from the  
14 United States department of veterans affairs and New Mexico's  
15 congressional delegation to participate in the task force; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be requested to  
17 report its findings to the military and veterans' affairs  
18 committee; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
20 transmitted to the secretary of veterans' services, the  
21 secretary of workforce solutions, the secretary of Indian  
22 affairs, the co-chairs of the military and veterans' affairs  
23 committee, the United States department of veterans affairs and  
24 New Mexico's congressional delegation.