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(Original Signature of Member)

115TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 4173

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study on the  
Veterans Crisis Line.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. BANKS of Indiana introduced the following bill; which was referred to the  
Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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## A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a  
study on the Veterans Crisis Line.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Crisis Line  
5       Study Act of 2017”.

6       **SEC. 2. STUDY ON EFFICACY OF VETERANS CRISIS LINE.**

7       (a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall  
8       conduct a study on the outcomes and the efficacy of the  
9       Veterans Crisis Line during the five-year period beginning

1 January 1, 2014, based on an analysis of national suicide  
2 data and data collected from the Veterans Crisis Line.

3 (b) MATTERS INCLUDED.—The study under sub-  
4 section (a) shall address the following:

5 (1) The efficacy of the Veterans Crisis Line in  
6 leading veterans to sustained mental health regi-  
7 mens, by determining—

8 (A) the number of veterans who, after con-  
9 tacting the Veterans Crisis Line and being re-  
10 ferred to a suicide prevention specialist, begin  
11 and continue mental health care furnished by  
12 the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; and

13 (B) the number of veterans who, after con-  
14 tacting the Veterans Crisis Line and being re-  
15 ferred to a suicide prevention specialist, ei-  
16 ther—

17 (i) begin mental health care furnished  
18 by the Secretary but do not continue such  
19 care; or

20 (ii) do not begin such care.

21 (2) The visibility of the Veterans Crisis Line,  
22 by determining—

23 (A) the number of veterans who contact  
24 the Veterans Crisis Line and have not pre-

1           viously received hospital care or medical serv-  
2           ices furnished by the Secretary; and

3           (B) the number of veterans who contact  
4           the Veterans Crisis Line and have previously  
5           received hospital care or medical services fur-  
6           nished by the Secretary.

7           (3) The role of the Veterans Crisis Line as part  
8           of the mental health care services of the Depart-  
9           ment, by determining, of the veterans who are en-  
10          rolled in the health care system established under  
11          section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, who  
12          contact the Veterans Crisis Line, the number who  
13          are under the care of a mental health care provider  
14          of the Department at the time of such contact.

15          (4) Whether receiving sustained mental health  
16          care affects suicidality and whether veterans pre-  
17          viously receiving mental health care furnished by the  
18          Secretary use the Veterans Crisis Line in times of  
19          crisis, with respect to the veterans described in para-  
20          graph (3), by determining the time frame between  
21          receiving such care and the time of such contact.

22          (5) The effectiveness of the Veterans Crisis  
23          Line in assisting veterans at risk for suicide when  
24          the Veterans Crisis Line is contacted by a non-vet-  
25          eran, by determining, of the number of non-veterans

1       who contact the Veterans Crisis Line looking for  
2       support in assisting a veteran, how many of such in-  
3       dividuals receive support in having a veteran begin  
4       to receive mental health care furnished by the Sec-  
5       retary.

6           (6) The overall efficacy of the Veterans Crisis  
7       Line in preventing suicides and whether the number  
8       of contacts affects the efficacy, by determining—

9           (A) the number of veterans who contact  
10       the Veterans Crisis Line who ultimately commit  
11       or attempt suicide; and

12          (B) of such veterans, how many times did  
13       a veteran contact the Veterans Crisis Line prior  
14       to committing or attempting suicide.

15          (7) The long-term efficacy of the Veterans Cri-  
16       sis Line in preventing repeated suicide attempts and  
17       whether the efficacy is temporary, by determining, of  
18       the number of veterans who contacted the Veterans  
19       Crisis Line and did not commit or attempt suicide  
20       during the following six-month period, the number  
21       who contacted the Veterans Crisis Line in crisis at  
22       a later time and thereafter did commit or attempt  
23       suicide.

24          (8) Whether referral to mental health care af-  
25       fects the risk of suicide, by determining—

1 (A) the number of veterans who contact  
2 the Veterans Crisis Line who are not referred  
3 to, or do not continue receiving, mental health  
4 care who commit suicide; and

5 (B) the number of veterans described in  
6 paragraph (1)(A) who commit or attempt sui-  
7 cide.

8 (9) The efficacy of the Veterans Crisis Line to  
9 promote continued mental health care in those vet-  
10 erans who are at high risk for suicide whose suicide  
11 was prevented, by determining, of the number of vet-  
12 erans who contacted the Veterans Crisis Line and  
13 did not commit or attempt suicide soon thereafter,  
14 the number that begin and continue to receive men-  
15 tal health care furnished by the Secretary.

16 (c) DATA COLLECTION PRACTICES.—During the re-  
17 maining time of the five-year period of study subsequent  
18 to the date of enactment, data shall be collected in no way  
19 differently than it had been collected during the previous  
20 portion of time under research. Data collection shall not  
21 be construed as being extended, contracted, or modified  
22 in any way due to this Act.

23 (d) SUBMISSION.—Not later than March 1, 2020, the  
24 Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Af-

1   fairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate the  
2   study under subsection (a).

3       (e) VETERANS CRISIS LINE DEFINED.—In this sec-  
4   tion, the term “Veterans Crisis Line” means the toll-free  
5   hotline for veterans established under section 1720F(h) of  
6   title 38, United States Code.