



**Statement for the Record from Laricke Blanchard, USAA Senior Vice President of  
Government Relations, to the U.S. House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Markup  
July 23, 2025**

On behalf of the United Services Automobile Association (USAA) and our 14 million members of the U.S. military, veterans who have honorably served, and their families, thank you for convening today's markup to advance legislation focused on improving the lives of our nation's veterans and their families. We appreciate the opportunity to submit this statement of support for H.R. 3863, *the VA Mental Health Outreach and Engagement Act*. We would also like to reiterate our [support](#) for H.R. 2148, *the Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act*.

USAA is a membership association that serves members of the military community, including active duty, Guard, Reserve, veterans, and their families. Since our founding in 1922 by 25 U.S. Army officers, USAA has facilitated the financial security of our members, associates, and their families by providing a full range of highly competitive financial products and services. In our second century of service, we remain focused on meeting our members' needs through every stage of life—from joining the military to buying a home to retiring.

**H.R. 3863, *the VA Mental Health Outreach and Engagement Act***

We commend the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for its commitment to ensuring veterans have access to quality and timely mental and behavioral health care and are encouraged by bipartisan legislative efforts to connect more veterans with mental health services. This bill would direct the VA to offer an annual mental health consultation to all veterans with a service-connected disability related to a mental health diagnosis and conduct outreach related to other mental health services furnished by the VA. It would also require the U.S. Government Accountability Office to conduct a review within two years of the impact of these provisions, including the number of veterans reached.

According to the 2024 VA National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report, more than 60 percent of veterans who died by suicide had a mental health or substance use disorder diagnosis, yet nearly 40 percent had no *documented* diagnosis, indicating many suicides occur outside traditional mental health care systems. Despite the availability of effective, evidence-based treatments within the VA, a recent RAND analysis of VA data found that 60 percent of veterans who died by suicide in 2022 had not used Veterans Health Administration (VHA) services in the year of their death or the prior year, and 40 percent had never used VA care. This underscores that many at-risk veterans are not engaged in care, even when they have service-connected mental health conditions.

Veteran suicide is a public health crisis that demands a holistic, comprehensive response from both the public and private sectors. In 2023, USAA founded Face the Fight, a coalition of over 250 corporations, foundations, nonprofit, and veteran-focused organizations joined together to raise awareness and support for veteran suicide prevention. To date, the initiative has funded 30 nonprofit organizations to scale programs and interventions proven to reduce veteran suicide. With Face the Fight funding and support, 245,000 veterans have been screened for suicide risk; 40,000 veterans have received suicide-specific interventions; and over 800 clinicians have been trained in targeted, suicide-specific treatments.

By requiring that veterans with service-connected mental health disabilities be offered an annual mental health appointment, this bill would establish critical touchpoints to monitor suicide risk, connect veterans to effective treatments, and increase awareness of available support, ultimately helping prevent suicide among those who served. USAA thanks Representatives Nikki Budzinski (D-IL) and Chuck Edwards (R-NC) for their leadership on this important proposal to ease the burden on veterans to understand the mental health services and support available to them.