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(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

To amend title 38, United States Code, to codify the National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report and to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to study the effects of the Chaplain Service of the Department on the risk of suicide among veterans.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

M____. _____ introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to codify the National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report and to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to study the effects of the Chaplain Service of the Department on the risk of suicide among veterans.

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 “Trauma Outreach, Un-
5 derstanding, and Resiliency through Spirituality Act” or
6 the “TOURS Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. NATIONAL VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION AN-**
2 **NUAL REPORT: CODIFICATION; ANNUAL**
3 **BRIEFING.**

4 Section 1720F of title 38, United States Code, is
5 amended—

6 (1) by redesignating subsection (l) as subsection
7 (m); and

8 (2) by inserting, after subsection (k), the fol-
9 lowing new subsection (l):

10 “(l) ANNUAL REPORT; BRIEFING.—(1) The Sec-
11 retary, acting through the Office of Mental Health and
12 Suicide Prevention of the Department, shall produce an
13 annual report on suicide prevention.

14 “(2) The Secretary shall submit each such report to
15 the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and
16 House of Representatives.

17 “(3) The Secretary shall provide an annual briefing
18 on the most recent such report to the Committees on Vet-
19 erans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representa-
20 tives.”.

21 **SEC. 3. EFFECT OF CHAPLAIN SERVICE OF THE DEPART-**
22 **MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ON RISK OF**
23 **SUICIDE BY VETERANS: STUDY; REPORT.**

24 (a) STUDY REQUIRED.—Not later than January 1,
25 2027, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a
26 two-year study on the relationship between—

1 (1) veterans' engagement with the Chaplain
2 Service and other faith-based programs of the De-
3 partment; and

4 (2) the risk of suicide among veterans.

5 (b) SCOPE.—In carrying out the study under this sec-
6 tion, the Secretary shall—

7 (1) identify and define measurable categories of
8 such engagement, including group activities, out-
9 reach events, and non-confidential interactions;

10 (2) track veterans' use of mental health services
11 that involve chaplains;

12 (3) track veterans' use of faith-based programs
13 of the Department;

14 (4) collect and analyze data on such engage-
15 ment across facilities of the Department;

16 (5) assess correlations, if any, between such en-
17 gagement and mental health outcomes, including
18 suicide-related behaviors; and

19 (6) identify best practices and programs that
20 demonstrate positive outcomes.

21 (c) LIMITATIONS.—In carrying out the study, the
22 Secretary shall ensure that—

23 (1) veterans are informed of such data collec-
24 tion;

1 (2) no data is collected or reported that would
2 compromise the confidentiality of medical records or
3 protected religious communications; and

4 (3) use of chaplaincy services remains vol-
5 untary.

6 (d) REPORTS.—The Secretary shall submit to the
7 Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House
8 of Representatives a report regarding such study not later
9 than 90 days after the end of each year of the study. Ele-
10 ments of each such report include the following:

11 (1) A summary of data collected.

12 (2) An analysis of trends and outcomes.

13 (3) A list of programs that the Secretary deter-
14 mines have a measurable effect on the risk of sui-
15 cide.

16 (4) Recommendations of the Secretary regard-
17 ing how to improve data collection regarding, and
18 resource allocation for, suicide prevention.