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HOUSE BILL NO. 1203**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE**

(Proposed by the House Committee on Public Safety

on January 28, 2022)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Tata)

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 20 of Title 2.2 a section numbered 2.2-2004.2, relating to Department of Veterans Services; Suicide Prevention Coordinator; position created; report.*

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 20 of Title 2.2 a section numbered 2.2-2004.2 as follows:

§ 2.2-2004.2. *Suicide Prevention Coordinator; position created; duties; report.*

A. *There is created in the Department of Veterans Services the position of Suicide Prevention Coordinator to support and closely coordinate effective mental health care services for military service members and veterans and their families.*

B. *The Suicide Prevention Coordinator shall:*

1. *Gather data on mental health challenges commonly experienced by military service members and veterans and their families that may lead to suicide;*

2. *In coordination with federal, state, and local partners, gather, review, analyze, and disseminate timely federal, state, and local data on the quantity, common causes, and methods of suicide utilized among military service members, veterans, and their family members;*

3. *Collaborate with federal, state, and local partners to increase mental health, substance abuse, and suicide risk screenings and refer military service members and veterans and their family members to the appropriate behavioral health and medical professionals or services;*

4. *Identify and coordinate new behavioral health and suicide prevention opportunities and funding for those opportunities and, from such funds as may be appropriated or are otherwise available for this purpose, administer a grant program to assist local partners in implementing and coordinating suicide prevention efforts in local communities;*

5. *Provide suicide prevention resources, training, and support to federal, state, and local agencies; and*

6. *Perform other duties as may be required to effectively provide suicide prevention resources, training, and support to military service members, veterans, and their families.*

C. *The Commissioner shall include a summary of the work of the Suicide Prevention Coordinator in the annual report to the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, the Governor, and the General Assembly as required pursuant to subdivision 9 of § 2.2-2004.*