

2023 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 256

Designating the first Sunday after Veterans Day, in 2023 and in each succeeding year, as Warrior Call Day in Virginia.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 1, 2023

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 17, 2023

WHEREAS, the rate of suicide for members of the United States Armed Forces serving on active duty increased from 20.3 suicides per 100,000 individuals in 2015 to 28.7 suicides per 100,000 individuals in 2020; and

WHEREAS, the suicide rate for veterans has steadily increased since 2006, with 6,261 veterans dying by suicide in 2019; and

WHEREAS, after adjusting for sex and age, the rate of veteran suicide in 2019 was 31.6 suicides per 100,000 individuals, substantially higher than the rate among adults in the United States who are not veterans at 16.8 suicides per 100,000 individuals; and

WHEREAS, more veterans have died by suicide in the last 10 years than members of the United States Armed Forces who died from combat in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, many of these veterans who died by suicide had no previous contact with the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in increased isolation and disconnection, further exacerbating mental and physical ailments such as post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury; and

WHEREAS, invisible wounds linked to an underlying and undiagnosed traumatic brain injury can mirror many mental health conditions, a problem that can be addressed through appropriate medical treatment; and

WHEREAS, additional research is needed to highlight the connection between traumatic brain injury as a root cause of invisible wounds and suicide by active duty members of the United States Armed Forces and veterans; and

WHEREAS, Warrior Call Day provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the high rates of death by suicide among veterans and reach out to service members who may be struggling with mental health or feeling disconnected from family, friends, and support systems; and

WHEREAS, on Warrior Call Day, all Virginians, especially members of the Armed Forces serving on active duty and veterans, are encouraged to call up a warrior, have an honest conversation, and connect them with support, understanding that making a warrior call could save a life; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly designate the first Sunday after Veterans Day, in 2023 and in each succeeding year, as Warrior Call Day in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to Feherty's Troops First Foundation so that members of the organization may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the Senate post the designation of this day on the General Assembly's website.

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