

Whereas, According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), an estimated 22 veterans die each day by suicide; and

Whereas, As the U.S. decreases its involvement in overseas conflicts and reduces the size of the active duty military, greater numbers of service members are transitioning back to civilian life; and

Whereas, Many of these returning service members, in addition to the 200,000 veterans that currently live in New York City, will be in need of mental health support designed to address the unique needs of veterans; and

Whereas, In March 2014, Senator John Walsh of Montana introduced S.2182, the Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act, a bill designed to combat suicide among veterans; and

Whereas, The Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act would improve access to care for veterans by extending the period during which veterans who experienced combat are eligible for care from five years to fifteen years; and

Whereas, The Act would assist veterans who may have been wrongfully discharged because of mental health issues by establishing a review process for such discharges; and

Whereas, The Act would increase the service capacity of the U.S. VA by offering student loan repayment to mental health care professionals that agree to long-term service commitments; and

Whereas, Under the Act, the U.S. VA and Department of Defense would be required to review their mental health care programs annually to ensure effectiveness, offer special training on identifying veterans that are at risk for suicide to their mental health providers, and to improve processes regarding medical records and prescriptions to ensure seamless care to transitioning service members; and

Whereas, Enhancing mental health care services provided by the federal government would better the lives and outcomes for thousands of returning service members and veterans living in New York City; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Congress to pass,

and the President of the United States to sign S.2182, the Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act, legislation expanding and improving care provided to veterans and service members with mental health disorders or are at risk for suicide.

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