

1 HJR151
2 199761-1
3 By Representatives Rafferty, McCampbell, Alexander, Hollis,
4 Lawrence, Chestnut, Warren, Drummond, Isbell, Clarke, Lee,
5 Sorrells, Daniels, Fincher, Marques, Allen, Dismukes, Forte,
6 Scott, Rowe, South, Weaver, Sullivan, Treadaway, Ellis, Fridy,
7 Oliver and Hall
8 RFD: Rules
9 First Read: 23-APR-19

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8 ESTABLISHING THE TASK FORCE ON VETERANS' SUICIDE.
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10 WHEREAS, the Alabama Legislature is concerned with
11 the health, safety, and welfare of all returning veterans of
12 this country's armed forces to Alabama; and

13 WHEREAS, the rate of mental health problems and
14 suicides for members of this country's armed forces remains
15 startlingly high; and

16 WHEREAS, In 2016, the veteran suicide rate in
17 Alabama was 60 percent higher than the rate for civilians and
18 9 percent higher than other southern states; and

19 WHEREAS, 16.6 percent of all suicide deaths in
20 Alabama are veterans; now therefore,

21 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH
22 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That there is created the Task
23 Force on Veterans' Suicide to investigate the causes of and
24 prevention of suicides among returning Alabama veterans of the
25 United States Military and to make recommendations to the
26 Legislature to address this important issue.

1 (a) The task force shall consist of nine members as
2 follows:

3 (1) One veteran appointed by the Commissioner of
4 Veterans' Affairs, and this member shall act as chair.

5 (2) One member appointed by the Speaker of the House
6 of Representatives.

7 (3) One member appointed by the Minority Leader of
8 the House of Representatives.

9 (4) One member appointed by the President of the
10 Senate.

11 (5) One member appointed by the Senate Minority
12 Leader.

13 (6) One veteran appointed by the Commissioner of the
14 Department of Mental Health.

15 (7) One representative from the Department of Public
16 Health, appointed by the State Health Officer.

17 (8) One representative of the Department of Human
18 Resources, appointed by the Commissioner of the Department of
19 Human Resources.

20 (9) One veteran appointed by the Governor.

21 (b) All appointing authorities shall coordinate
22 their appointments so that diversity of gender, race, and
23 geographical areas is reflective of the makeup of this state.
24 To the extent practicable, the appointing authorities shall
25 endeavour to appoint a veteran.

26 (c) The members of the task force shall serve with
27 no compensation other than per diem or travel reimbursement to

1 be paid by the appointing authority according to the
2 constitution, state law, or existing policies or rules.

3 (d) The first meeting of the task force shall be
4 called by the chair to organize and prioritize the actions of
5 the task force. Subsequent meetings may be called by the chair
6 or a majority of the membership of the task force.

7 (d) The Department of Veterans' Affairs shall
8 provide administrative and other support to the task force.

9 (e) (1) Within 60 days of the first meeting of the
10 task force, the task force shall meet with representatives of
11 AlaVetNet to coordinate the dissemination of information
12 gathered by AlaVetNet related to this issue and to consult
13 with AlaVetNet regarding associated issues related to veteran
14 suicide.

15 (2) The task force shall also coordinate and
16 communicate with relevant nonprofit groups and student veteran
17 organizations and groups of public two-year and four-year
18 colleges and universities regarding issues associated with
19 veteran suicide.

20 (f) The task force shall hold, at a minimum, one
21 town hall meeting to discuss issues related to veteran suicide
22 in all municipalities in the state whose population exceeds
23 70,000 according to the latest federal decennial census.

24 (g) A progress report, including any preliminary
25 recommendations, shall be submitted by the task force
26 quarterly to the Legislature.

1 (h) The Alabama Task Force on Veterans' Suicide
2 shall present a report of its findings, which shall include
3 its recommendations for legislation, if any, to the
4 Legislature on or before two years from the enactment of this
5 resolution.

6 (i) The task force shall be dissolved after the
7 submission of its report to the Legislature.