

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(9) One veteran appointed by the Governor.

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

(c) The members of the task force shall serve with 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.

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

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