

HOUSE BILL 298

56TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2024

INTRODUCED BY

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This document may incorporate amendments proposed by a committee, but not yet adopted, as well as amendments that have been adopted during the current legislative session. The document is a tool to show amendments in context and cannot be used for the purpose of adding amendments to legislation.

AN ACT

RELATING TO VETERANS; ENACTING THE SERVICE MEMBERS AND VETERANS SUICIDE PREVENTION ACT WITHIN THE VETERANS' SERVICES DEPARTMENT ACT; PROVIDING DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES TO RAISE AWARENESS REGARDING SUICIDE WITHIN THE POPULATIONS OF SERVICE MEMBERS, VETERANS AND MILITARY AND VETERAN FAMILY MEMBERS AND TO INCREASE ACCESS TO SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCES; PROVIDING DEFINITIONS HAFC→; ~~MAKING AN APPROPRIATION~~←HAFC .

.227682.2AIC February 7, 2024 (6:59pm)

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BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. A new section of the Veterans' Services Department Act is enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] SHORT TITLE.--This act may be cited as the "Service Members and Veterans Suicide Prevention Act"."

SECTION 2. A new section of the Veterans' Services Department Act is enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] DEFINITIONS.--As used in the Service Members and Veterans Suicide Prevention Act:

A. "family member" means a family member of either a service member or a veteran;

B. "program" means the service members and veterans suicide prevention program;

C. "service member" means an individual who is serving in the armed forces of the United States or in an active reserve component of the armed forces of the United States, including the national guard; and

D. "veteran" means a person who has received an honorable discharge or separation from military service in the armed forces of the United States or in an active reserve component of the armed forces of the United States, including the national guard."

SECTION 3. A new section of the Veterans' Services Department Act is enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM ESTABLISHED-- DEVELOPMENT--COLLABORATION.--

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A. The "service members and veterans suicide prevention program" is established within the department. If deemed appropriate, the department may develop and operate the program in collaboration with the department of health or other state agencies and when practicable with community services organizations, including nonprofit organizations, and with federal partners and individuals directly impacted by risk of or loss from suicide of a service member, veteran or family member.

B. The program established pursuant to Subsection A of this section shall be designed to:

(1) raise awareness of and reduce death by suicide within the population of service members, veterans and family members;

(2) work to reduce barriers at the community and individual level that increase the risk of suicide by increasing access to crisis and suicide prevention services;

(3) connect service members, veterans and family members whose need for services are based upon a risk of death by suicide or other circumstances outlined by the program, with appropriate community and mental health providers and resources;

(4) raise awareness of and access to behavioral health services and resources and promote evidence-based best practices and safe messaging to increase awareness of suicide prevention hotlines and other crisis resources

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available to service members, veterans and family members;

(5) within the framework of the program, advocate for service members, veterans and family members at risk for suicide; and

(6) work to increase public awareness about the issue of suicide among service members, veterans and family members and its root causes.

C. In implementing the program as provided in Subsection A of this section, and on an ongoing basis, the department shall develop methods to provide support and guidance to communities aiding in the development of strategic planning designed to reduce suicide among service members, veterans and family members, including the engagement and coordination of local leadership, faith-based entities, schools, chambers of commerce, public and private providers, grassroots coalitions and other stakeholders as identified and appropriate.

D. The department shall collaborate with the department of health and any other appropriate state agency to promote mental health awareness, including:

- (1) the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline;
 - (2) the veterans crisis line and the veterans crisis line for those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing;
 - (3) the national suicide prevention lifeline;
- and
- (4) local resources available to assist in

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crisis intervention and ongoing supports."

SECTION 4. A new section of the Veterans' Services Department Act is enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] DEPARTMENT EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS-- TRAINING.--The department shall provide appropriate training to department staff responsible for implementing the program established in Subsection A of Section 3 of the Service Members and Veterans Suicide Prevention Act and carrying out the provisions of that act and shall provide educational materials to department staff and partnering state agencies and community partners to increase the capacity to raise awareness and to identify and engage service members, veterans and family members at risk of suicide."

SECTION 5. A new section of the Veterans' Services Department Act is enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] REPORT.--Beginning in 2024, the department shall submit an annual written report regarding the program established pursuant to Section 3 of the Service Members and Veterans Suicide Prevention Act to the governor and the interim legislative military and veterans' affairs committee by October 30 of each year. The report shall include program efforts made and successes, pertinent data-driven information and barriers faced and shall be posted on the department's website."

SECTION 6. A new section of the Veterans' Services Department Act is enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] DEPARTMENT RULES.--No later than December .227682.2AIC February 7, 2024 (6:59pm)

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1, 2024, the department shall promulgate rules for the carrying out of the provisions of the Service Members and Veterans Suicide Prevention Act."

H AFC → ~~SECTION 7. APPROPRIATION.--One hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) is appropriated from the general fund to the veterans' services department for expenditure in fiscal year 2025 to carry out the provisions of the Service Members and Veterans Suicide Prevention Act. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2025 shall revert to the general fund.~~ ← H AFC

SECTION H AFC → 8. ← H AFC H AFC → 7. ← H AFC EFFECTIVE DATE.--The effective date of the provisions of this act is July 1, 2024.