

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1308

To direct the Secretary of Defense to adopt a program of professional and confidential screenings to detect mental health injuries acquired during deployment in support of a contingency operation and ultimately to reduce the incidence of suicide among veterans.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 4, 2009

Mr. MCMAHON (for himself, Mr. ROONEY, and Mr. PERRIELLO) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Defense to adopt a program of professional and confidential screenings to detect mental health injuries acquired during deployment in support of a contingency operation and ultimately to reduce the incidence of suicide among veterans.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Mental
5 Health Screening and Assessment Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

2 It is the sense of Congress that—

3 (1) the increasing rate of suicide among vet-
4 erans returning from Operation Enduring Freedom
5 and Operation Iraqi Freedom is a serious problem;
6 and

7 (2) the Secretary of Defense should conduct
8 mandatory, face-to-face and confidential mental
9 health and traumatic brain injury screenings by a li-
10 censed medical professional, for each member of the
11 Armed Forces, during the period beginning 90 days
12 after the date on which the member completes a de-
13 ployment in support of a contingency operation and
14 ending 180 days after such date.

15 **SEC. 3. MANDATORY, FACE-TO-FACE AND CONFIDENTIAL**
16 **SCREENINGS FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION**
17 **AMONG VETERANS.**

18 (a) MANDATORY SCREENINGS.—The Secretary of
19 Defense shall carry out a mandatory, face-to-face, and
20 confidential mental health and traumatic brain injury
21 screening conducted by a licensed medical professional, for
22 each member of the Armed Forces, during the period be-
23 ginning 90 days after the date on which the member com-
24 pletes a deployment in support of a contingency operation
25 and ending 180 days after such date.

1 (b) REQUIREMENTS OF SCREENING.—The screenings
2 required by subsection (a) shall be designed to—

3 (1) provide the members of the Armed Forces
4 with an objective mental health and traumatic brain
5 injury standard to screen for suicide risk factors;

6 (2) ease the members' transitions by allowing
7 them to be honest in their assessments;

8 (3) battle the stigma of depression and mental
9 health problems among service personnel and vet-
10 erans; and

11 (4) ultimately reduce the prevalence of suicide
12 among veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Op-
13 eration Enduring Freedom.

14 (c) RETURN TO UNITED STATES.—The Secretary of
15 Defense may not prohibit a member of the Armed Forces
16 from returning to the United States by reason of any re-
17 sult or determination made pursuant to a screening con-
18 ducted under subsection (a).

19 (d) REQUIREMENT FOR DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
20 AND DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO SHARE IN-
21 FORMATION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH SCREENINGS.—

22 Pursuant to and consistent with requirements of the
23 Wounded Warrior Act (title IV of Public Law 110–181;
24 10 U.S.C. 1071 note), and section 1614 of that Act in
25 particular, and section 1720F of title 38, United States

1 Code, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Vet-
2 erans Affairs shall establish a joint protocol to share exist-
3 ing and future reports from confidential mental health
4 screenings conducted under this section to help aid mem-
5 bers of the Armed Forces in their transition from health
6 care and treatment provided by the Department of De-
7 fense to health care and treatment provided by the De-
8 partment of Veterans Affairs.

9 (e) CONTINGENCY OPERATION.—for the purposes of
10 this Act, the term “contingency operation” has the mean-
11 ing given that term under section 101(13) of title 10,
12 United States Code.

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