

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2219

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to award a grant to a private, nonprofit entity to establish, publicize, and operate a national toll-free suicide prevention telephone hotline targeted to and staffed by veterans of the Armed Forces.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 8, 2007

Mr. MORAN of Virginia (for himself, Mr. RAMSTAD, Mr. SIRES, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. HILL, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, and Mr. GILCHREST) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to award a grant to a private, nonprofit entity to establish, publicize, and operate a national toll-free suicide prevention telephone hotline targeted to and staffed by veterans of the Armed Forces.

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 Suicide Pre-
5 vention Hotline Act of 2007”.

1 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE VET2VET NATIONAL SUI-**
2 **CIDE PREVENTION HOTLINE.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
4 (in this Act referred to as the “Secretary”) shall award
5 1 grant for a period of not more than 3 years to an eligible
6 entity to establish, publicize, and operate a national toll-
7 free telephone number to serve as a suicide prevention hot-
8 line targeted to and staffed predominately by veterans of
9 the Armed Forces.

10 (b) HOTLINE ACTIVITIES.—The entity receiving the
11 grant under subsection (a) shall—

12 (1) enter into a contract with a telecommuni-
13 cations carrier for the use of a national toll-free tele-
14 phone number;

15 (2) select, train, and supervise personnel (con-
16 sisting predominately of veterans of the Armed
17 Forces) to answer incoming telephone calls and pro-
18 vide counseling and referral services to callers;

19 (3) ensure that sufficient staffing is provided so
20 that hotline services are available to callers at all
21 times;

22 (4) assemble and maintain a current database
23 of information to be used to refer callers to local
24 service providers, such as information about mental
25 health service providers located throughout the
26 United States (including regional mental health clin-

1 ics and Department of Veterans Affairs medical cen-
2 ters) and information about the availability of shel-
3 ters for homeless callers;

4 (5) publicize the hotline to potential callers; and

5 (6) to the extent that the entity receiving the
6 grant provides hotline services through a local crisis
7 center operating as a subcontractor, certify the ca-
8 pacity of and provide supplemental training for that
9 local crisis center.

10 (c) ELIGIBILITY.—In order to be eligible to receive
11 the grant under this section, a private, nonprofit entity
12 shall prepare and submit an application at such time, in
13 such form, and with such information and assurances as
14 the Secretary may require, including a description of—

15 (1) the training that will be provided by the en-
16 tity to ensure that personnel will be able to effec-
17 tively provide counseling and referral services and
18 operate any technological systems used by the hot-
19 line;

20 (2) the selection criteria for hotline personnel;

21 (3) the recruitment process for obtaining vet-
22 erans to serve as hotline answering personnel;

23 (4) the plan for—

24 (A) creating, maintaining, and using the
25 database described in subsection (b)(4),

1 (B) publicizing the availability of the hot-
2 line to potential callers through targeted mar-
3 keting to veterans, and

4 (C) facilitating access to the hotline for
5 people with hearing impairments;

6 (5) the entity's recognized expertise—

7 (A) in the area of suicide prevention, and

8 (B) in working with individuals who have
9 served in the Armed Forces; and

10 (6) the entity's commitment to diversity and to
11 the provision of appropriate services to ethnic mi-
12 norities, racial minorities, elderly individuals, and in-
13 dividuals with disabilities.

14 (d) ANNUAL REPORT.—The entity receiving the
15 grant under subsection (a) shall submit an annual report
16 to the Secretary at such time, in such form, and with such
17 information as the Secretary may require, including the
18 hotline's call volume, the demand for specific types of re-
19 ferrals, and the number of trained volunteers answering
20 the hotline.

21 (e) ANNUAL APPROVAL.—Payments of the grant
22 awarded under this section shall be subject to annual ap-
23 proval by the Secretary and to the availability of appro-
24 priations for each fiscal year.

1 **SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appro-
3 priated \$2,500,000 each year for fiscal years 2008, 2009,
4 and 2010 for grants under section 2.

5 (b) CARRY OVER.—Amounts appropriated pursuant
6 to the authorization of appropriations under subsection (a)
7 shall remain available until expended.

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