

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 18, 2015

The Honorable Charlie Dent
Chairman
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies
HVC-227, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dent and Ranking Member Bishop:

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to the health and well-being of our nation's veterans. Our veterans have made great sacrifices to ensure the safety and best interests of our nation. Your support of our nation's great men and women is sincerely appreciated.

In 2015, Congress appropriated \$133 million for suicide prevention and outreach services for the Departments of Veterans Affairs. We believe that the committee's past support goes a long way to help save lives, and we ask that you increase the funding level for 2016 to \$144 million, an increase of \$11 million.

We know that you share our deep concern about the high rate at which veterans are committing suicide. As you balance a number of competing interests in preparing the final appropriations for fiscal year 2016, we ask that you consider a recent study which found that the annual suicide rate among veterans remains unacceptably high at, roughly 50% higher than the civilian rate for individuals with similar demographic profiles.

Providing funding for programs that offer suicide prevention counseling and peer-to-peer outreach services, such as New Jersey's Vets4Warriors, has made a dramatic difference in the lives of many veterans. Continuing support for such programs is vital in reducing the number of suicides among our service members. Accordingly, we ask that you increase funding to \$144 million in fiscal year 2016 for veteran suicide prevention programs.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request.

Sincerely,


BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN
Member of Congress


ELIZABETH H. ESTY
Member of Congress


FRANK LOBIONDO
Member of Congress

Peter DeFazio

Bobby L. Baker

David N. Ladd

Keith Ellison

Barbara Lee

Chaka Fattah

Gene Smith

Charles B. Rangel

Diana DeBette

Alan M.

John L. Dingell

Robert A. Gibbs

Charles P.

Louis Gohmert

Andrew R. Young

Jim Matheson

Shirley Jackson

Ernest C. Brown

Daniel Lipinski

Jan Schatz

Bea Roush

Judy Chu

Paul Denton

Paul D. Tonko

Brendan F. Boyle
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Mark DeSaulnier

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Leis Park

Earl Blumenreich

Bill Foster

Keith J. Rothfus

Erin Swadwell

Alan Lowenthal

Frederica S. Wilson

Mike Thompson

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Lili

Cheri Buston

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Juan C. Cisneros

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Alma Adams

John Doe

Beto O'Rourke

Mark Zuckerberg

Dave Loebsack

Ari Ben

John Doe

Min Van Kalk

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Deirdre

Bill Johnson

John Doe

Matthew A. Carter

Raul M. Grijalva

Kyrsten Sinema

Tom Vargos

John Doe

Michael Flood

Niki Bonny

Brenda Lawrence

Jill Miller

Louise M. Slaughter
Step S. Slaughter

Ellis L. Engel
A. S. Slaughter