

Fact Sheet

H.R. 5059, Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans (SAV) Act

Key Points:

- H.R. 5059, the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act is a key legislative step to help stem the epidemic of veteran suicide.
- An estimated 22 veterans commit suicide each day – more than 8,000 each year. Of the more than 2 million Americans who have served in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, it is estimated that one-third, roughly 600,000 men and women, have traumatic brain injury, PTSD or Depression.
- Named in honor of Marine Corporal Clay Hunt, an Iraq and Afghanistan War veteran who was awarded the Purple Heart and dedicated suicide prevention advocate who tragically took his own life – this bill expands access to mental health services for our nation’s veterans and increases the capacity and efficiency of VA care to deal with the more than one million veterans returning from war.
- The bill:
 - ★ Establishes a peer support and community outreach pilot program to assist transitioning servicemembers with accessing VA mental health care services.
 - ★ Requires the VA to create a one-stop, interactive website to serve as a centralized information source regarding all mental health services for veterans.
 - ★ Takes steps to address the shortage of mental health care professionals by authorizing the VA to conduct a student loan repayment pilot program aimed at recruiting and retaining psychiatrists.
 - ★ Requires a yearly evaluation, conducted by a third party, of all mental health care and suicide prevention practices and programs at the DOD and VA to find out what is working and what’s not working and to make recommendations to improve care.
 - ★ Authorizes a GAO report on the transition of care for PTSD and traumatic brain injury (TBI) between the DOD and VA.
- The Clay Hunt SAV Act has strong bipartisan support. Introduced by Congressman Tim Walz (D-MN), the highest ranking enlisted soldier ever to serve in Congress, and co-authored by Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs Jeff Miller (R-FL) and Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), a Purple Heart recipient, Iraq War veteran, and member of the Army National Guard – the bill has 131 additional cosponsors.
- The bill also has the support of Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) including the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) and Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA).