

STATE OF NEW YORK

1788

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 15, 2021

Introduced by Sens. SANDERS, ADDABBO, BROOKS, GAUGHRAN, GOUNARDES, HELMING, JACKSON, KAPLAN, LANZA, LIU, MYRIE, PARKER, RITCHIE, SAVINO -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs

AN ACT to create a veterans' mental health and suicide prevention task force; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Legislative intent. The legislature is concerned with the
2 health, safety, and welfare of all returning veterans of the United
3 States armed forces to New York and the high rate of mental health prob-
4 lems and suicides of members of the United States armed forces.
5 § 2. Veterans' suicide task force. (a) There is hereby created the
6 veterans' mental health and suicide prevention task force to examine,
7 evaluate and determine how to improve mental health and suicide
8 prevention for our veterans, consisting of seven members, each to serve
9 until May first, two thousand twenty-three.
10 (b)(1) Such members shall be appointed as follows: one member shall be
11 appointed by the governor; one member shall be appointed by the tempo-
12 rary president of the senate; one member shall be appointed by the
13 minority leader of the senate; one member shall be appointed by the
14 speaker of the assembly; one member shall be appointed by the minority
15 leader of the assembly; one member shall be appointed by the director of
16 the New York State Division of Veterans' Services; and one member shall
17 be appointed by the commissioner of health. Appointments shall be made
18 within sixty days of the effective date of this act. Vacancies in the
19 task force shall be filled in the manner provided for original appoint-
20 ments.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 (2) All appointees shall have expertise in fields or disciplines
2 related to mental health. All appointments shall be coordinated to
3 ensure geographic representation from the entire state.

4 (3) The task force shall be chaired by the governor's appointee. The
5 task force shall elect a vice-chair and other necessary officers from
6 among all appointed members.

7 (4) A majority of the members of the task force then in office shall
8 constitute a quorum for the transaction of business or the exercise of
9 any power or function of the task force. An act, determination or deci-
10 sion of the majority of the members present during the presence of a
11 quorum shall be held to be the act, determination, or decision of the
12 task force.

13 (5) The task force shall meet at least quarterly at the call of the
14 chair. Meetings may be held via teleconference. Special meetings may be
15 called by the chair at the request of a majority of the members of the
16 task force.

17 (6) Members of the task force shall receive no compensation for their
18 services but shall be reimbursed for their actual expenses incurred in
19 the performance of their duties in the work of the task force.

20 (c) The task force shall:

21 (1) study current mental health practices and suicide prevention
22 efforts; and

23 (2) recommend mental health practices and suicide prevention efforts
24 to increase effectiveness across the state.

25 (d) The task force may establish such advisory committees as it deems
26 appropriate on matters relating to the task force's functions, powers
27 and duties. Such committees shall be chaired by a task force member, but
28 may be composed of task force members as well as other individuals
29 selected by the task force to provide expertise of interest specific to
30 the charge of such committees.

31 (e) The task force may, as it deems appropriate, request that studies,
32 surveys, or analyses relating to the task force's powers and duties be
33 performed by any state department, commission, agency or public authori-
34 ty. All state departments, commissions, agencies or public authorities
35 shall provide information and advice in a timely manner and otherwise
36 assist the task force with its work.

37 (f) The task force shall submit a request for any appropriation as
38 shall be necessary to enable the task force to perform its functions and
39 duties to the governor, director of the division of budget, and chair-
40 persons of the senate finance committee and the assembly ways and means
41 committee.

42 (g) The task force may hold public hearings, take testimony and make
43 investigations at such places as it deems necessary.

44 (h) The task force shall make a preliminary report to the governor and
45 the legislature of its findings, conclusions, recommendations and activ-
46 ities already undertaken by the task force, not later than June 1, 2022,
47 and a final report of its findings, conclusions, recommendations and
48 activities already undertaken by the task force, not later than March 1,
49 2023 and shall submit with its reports legislative proposals as it deems
50 necessary to implement its recommendations.

51 § 3. This act shall take effect on the sixtieth day after it shall
52 have become a law and shall expire May 1, 2023 when upon such date the
53 provisions of this act shall be deemed to be repealed.