

Assembly Resolution No. 1037

BY: M. of A. Gunther

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim September 22, 2024, as Veterans Suicide Awareness and Remembrance Day in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official days and months that are set aside to increase awareness of serious mental health issues that affect the lives of citizens of New York State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, it is the sense of this Legislative Body to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim September 22, 2024, as Veterans Suicide Awareness and Remembrance Day in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of September 2024, as National Suicide Prevention Month; and

WHEREAS, Established to recognize the life and death of Senior Airman Robert McRae Dean and every veteran and active military member who has died by suicide, Veterans Suicide Awareness Day is also meant to elevate the issue in the public consciousness and to focus on prevention efforts; and

WHEREAS, The United States Department of Veterans Affairs has previously reported that an average of 22 veterans per day commit suicide; and

WHEREAS, The rate of suicide among veterans was 1.4 times higher among male veterans and 1.8 times higher among female veterans when compared to the general adult population; and

WHEREAS, In 2016 alone, 153 veterans in New York State committed suicide; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body urges all New Yorkers to remember that many of the wounds of war are unseen and persist long after the end of a veteran's military service; and

WHEREAS, Veteran Suicide Awareness and Remembrance Day honors the fallen and their families by bringing awareness to this serious issue and commemorating their service to their State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, Veteran suicide must be talked about in order to remove the stigma surrounding it; by normalizing an otherwise taboo subject of mental health among veterans and active military, they will hopefully seek out the care they need without fear of judgment, thereby leading to a reduction of suicides; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative that there be greater awareness of this mental health condition, and more must be done to increase activity at the local, State and National levels; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate September 22, 2024, as Veterans Suicide Awareness and Remembrance Day, in conjunction with the observance of September 2024, as National Suicide Prevention Month; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York; and the New York State Division of Veterans' Services.