

STATE OF NEW YORK

2248--A

2019-2020 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 23, 2019

Introduced by Sens. SANDERS, ADDABBO, JACKSON, LANZA, PARKER, RITCHIE, SAVINO -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs -- recommitted to the Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs in accordance with Senate Rule 6, sec. 8 -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

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-two.
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

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

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1 task force shall be filled in the manner provided for original appoint-
2 ments.

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

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

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

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

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

22 (c) The task force shall:

23 (1) study current mental health practices and suicide prevention
24 efforts; and

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

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

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

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

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

46 (h) The task force shall make a preliminary report to the governor and
47 the legislature of its findings, conclusions, recommendations and activ-
48 ities already undertaken by the task force, not later than June 1, 2021,
49 and a final report of its findings, conclusions, recommendations and
50 activities already undertaken by the task force, not later than March 1,
51 2022 and shall submit with its reports legislative proposals as it deems
52 necessary to implement its recommendations.

53 § 3. This act shall take effect on the sixtieth day after it shall
54 have become a law and shall expire May 1, 2022 when upon such date the
55 provisions of this act shall be deemed to be repealed.