STATE OF NEW YORK

5836--A

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

February 26, 2021

Introduced by M. of A. CUSICK, GRIFFIN -- read once and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to create a veterans' suicide prevention temporary 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:

Section 1. Legislative intent. The legislature is concerned with the health, safety, and welfare of all returning veterans of the United States armed forces to New York and the high rate of mental health problems and suicides of members of the United States armed forces.

§ 2. Veterans' suicide prevention temporary task force. (a) There is hereby created the veterans' temporary suicide prevention task force to examine, evaluate and determine how to improve mental health and suicide prevention for our veterans, consisting of nine members, each to serve until May first, two thousand twenty-three.

(b)(1) Such members shall be appointed as follows: three members shall be appointed by the governor; two members shall be appointed by the temporary president of the senate; one member shall be appointed by the minority leader of the senate; two members shall be appointed by the speaker of the assembly; and one member shall be appointed by the minority leader of the assembly. Appointments shall be made within sixty days of the effective date of this act. Vacancies in the temporary task force shall be filled in the manner provided for original appointments.

(2) All appointees shall have expertise in fields or disciplines related to mental health and at least three members shall have worked with members of the military or veterans community on a professional basis. All appointments shall be coordinated to ensure geographic representation from the entire state.

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

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

(4) A majority of the members of the temporary task force then in office shall constitute a quorum.

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

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

(c) The temporary task force shall:

(1) study current mental health practices and suicide prevention efforts of those individuals who have served on active military duty;

(2) recommend mental health practices and suicide prevention efforts to increase effectiveness across the state for those individuals who have served on active military duty;

(3) determine potential reasons for the number of veterans who have committed suicide and how this may be addressed by the state of New York;

(4) determine what role post traumatic stress disorder and military sexual trauma may have contributed to the number of veterans suicides in the state of New York;

(d) work with the New York state suicide prevention task force and the New York state suicide prevention council; and

(e) make a preliminary report to the governor and the legislature of its findings, conclusions, recommendations and activities already undertaken by the temporary task force, not later than June 1, 2023, and a final report of its findings, conclusions, recommendations and activities already undertaken by the temporary task force, not later than June 30, 2024 and shall submit with its reports legislative proposals as it deems necessary to implement its recommendations.

§ 3. This act shall take effect on the sixtieth day after it shall have become a law and shall expire August 31, 2024 when upon such date the provisions of this act shall be deemed to be repealed.