

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:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

14 (c) The temporary task force shall:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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