

Assembly Resolution No. 1553

**BY:** M. of A. Rules (Stern)

**MEMORIALIZING** Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim September 22, 2026, 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, 2026, as Veterans Suicide Awareness and Remembrance Day in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of September 2026 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 die by 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 2022, New York veterans died by suicide at nearly twice the rate of the general population, and the veterans suicide rate increased by 2.6%; 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, veterans in need 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, 2026, as Veterans Suicide Awareness and Remembrance Day in the State of New York; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York; and Commissioner Viviana DeCohen, New York State Department of Veterans' Services.