

1 AN ACT relating to veteran suicide prevention.

2 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:*

3 ➔SECTION 1. A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 40 IS CREATED TO
4 READ AS FOLLOWS:

5 *(1) The Kentucky Service Members, Veterans, and their Families Suicide Prevention*
6 *Program is hereby created within the Kentucky Department of Veterans' Affairs*
7 *and shall be attached to the office of the commissioner for administrative*
8 *purposes.*

9 *(2) The Kentucky Service Members, Veterans, and their Families Suicide Prevention*
10 *Program shall operate in collaboration with the Cabinet for Health and Family*
11 *Services and in conjunction with additional community partnerships, as*
12 *appropriate.*

13 *(3) The mission of the program shall be to raise awareness of and reduce death by*
14 *suicide within the population of service members, veterans, and their families.*
15 *The program shall work to reduce barriers at the community and individual level*
16 *that increase the risk of suicide by increasing access to services and collaborating*
17 *with a statewide network of partners including state government agencies,*
18 *community partners, nonprofit organizations, federal partners, and individuals*
19 *directly impacted by risk of or loss from suicide.*

20 *(4) The program shall connect service members, veterans, and their families, whose*
21 *need for services is based upon their risk of death by suicide or other*
22 *circumstances as outlined by the program, with appropriate community and*
23 *mental health resources. The program shall:*

24 *(a) 1. Raise awareness of and access to behavioral health services and*
25 *resources, promote evidence-based best practices and safe messaging*
26 *to increase awareness of veteran suicide prevention hotlines and other*
27 *crisis resources, and connect service members, veterans, and their*

- 1 families to trained mental health providers and appropriate
2 community resources; and
- 3 2. Advocate for service members, veterans, and their families at risk for
4 suicide, and work to increase public awareness about the issue of
5 suicide among veterans and its root causes;
- 6 (b) Provide support and guidance to communities aiding in the development of
7 strategic planning designed to reduce suicide among service members,
8 veterans, and their families, including the engagement and coordination of
9 local leadership, faith-based entities, schools, chambers of commerce,
10 public and private providers, grassroots coalitions, and additional
11 stakeholders as identified and appropriate. These efforts shall include but
12 not be limited to the promotion of mental health awareness, the 988 Suicide
13 Crisis Lifeline created in accordance with Pub. L. No. 116-172, the Green
14 Alert under KRS 39F.180, and local resources available to assist in crisis
15 intervention and ongoing supports; and
- 16 (c) Promote training opportunities and provide educational materials to
17 department and partnering agencies to increase the capacity to raise
18 awareness, identify, and engage service members, veterans, and their
19 families at risk of suicide.
- 20 (5) The department shall submit an annual written report to the Governor and the
21 Legislative Research Commission by October 30 of each year. The report shall
22 include efforts made, data-driven information, and legislative and budgetary
23 barriers. The report shall be available to the public on the department's website.
- 24 (6) Notwithstanding any other statute to the contrary, nothing in this bill shall permit
25 any state agency to seize or advocate for the seizure of weapons.
- 26 (7) The department shall promulgate administrative regulations in accordance with
27 KRS Chapter 13A as necessary to effectuate this section.