

HR 8 - AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

24Feb2021... 0097h

2021 SESSION

21-0182

06/05

HOUSE RESOLUTION

8

A RESOLUTION requesting an investigation on whether opioids, benzodiazepines, and exposure to chemical agents contribute to suicides by veterans.

SPONSORS: Rep. Abramson, Rock. 37; Rep. Greeson, Graf. 16; Rep. Ankarberg, Straf. 10

COMMITTEE: State-Federal Relations and Veterans Affairs

AMENDED ANALYSIS

This resolution requests that the United States Congress, the Department of Defense, and the Veterans Administration continue to investigate whether opioids, benzodiazepines, and exposure to agent orange contribute to a higher rate of suicides by veteran members of the armed forces and whether veterans who seek treatment for conditions that cause pain should receive alternative treatments before receiving prescriptions for opioids.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty One

A RESOLUTION requesting an investigation on whether opioids, benzodiazepines, and exposure to chemical agents contribute to suicides by veterans.

1 Whereas, in fiscal 2012, the Veterans Administration issued benzodiazepines to 28 percent of the
2 640,000 veterans seen for post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and the amount of prescriptions at
3 the Veterans Administration for these drugs amounted to 2.4 million in fiscal 2014; and

4 Whereas, 27 percent of veterans who received opioid analgesics from 2004-2009 also received
5 benzodiazepines; and

6 Whereas, benzodiazepines can be addictive and can possibly enhance fear following trauma and
7 suicidal thoughts, they also have some valid uses, such as stopping panic attacks from escalating,
8 easing sleep disorders, and helping agitated patients at high risk of harm to themselves or others;
9 and

10 Whereas, the 2015 suicide rate for female veterans receiving care through the Veterans Health
11 Administration was 17.8 per 100,000, compared to 45.6 male veterans under care; and

12 Whereas, the Department of Veterans Affairs now reports that the New Hampshire veterans
13 suicide rate of 33 per year was, "significantly higher than the national suicide rate;" and

14 Whereas, 20.6 armed service veterans are taking their own lives each day, substantially higher
15 than the national average, with the suicide rate for veterans aged 18-34 increased substantially to
16 45 deaths per 100,000; and

17 Whereas, while the Veterans Administration's clinical practice guidelines recommend against
18 their use in patients with PTSD due to "lack of efficacy data and growing evidence for the potential
19 risk of harm," physicians often prescribe them to patients who come to them already taking those
20 medications because abruptly stopping them can incur serious risks; and

21 Whereas, the suicide rate among veterans ages 18 to 27 receiving care at VA medical facilities is
22 79 per 100,000, and suicide rates among armed service veterans receiving care has been
23 substantially higher than among those not under care; now, therefore, be it

24 Resolved by the House of Representatives:

25 That the New Hampshire house of representatives respectfully urges the Congress of the United
26 States, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Veterans Affairs to continue to
27 investigate whether opioids, benzodiazepines, exposure to agent orange, insecticides,
28 pyridostigmine bromide, and nerve agents including, but not limited to, sarin and cyclosarin, as well
29 as vaccines administered to military personnel such as Mefloquine, and constant, long term stress
30 from service in the theater of operations are contributing to the high number of suicides by veteran
31 members of the armed forces and whether veteran members of the armed forces who seek treatment

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1 for conditions that cause pain should receive alternative treatments such as chiropractic, physical
2 therapy, occupational therapy, acupuncture, massage therapy, and/or osteopathic manipulation
3 before receiving prescriptions for opioids; and

4 That the house clerk forward official copies of this resolution to the President of the
5 United States, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the President of the
6 United States Senate, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and to all the
7 members of the New Hampshire congressional delegation with the request that this resolution be
8 officially entered in the Congressional Record as a high priority for the Congress of the United States
9 of America.