

Intro. to C.C.

1-15-2014

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Veterans of the United States Armed Forces have served our Country with distinction and courage, and it is incumbent upon the government to assist these loyal Americans as they return from their tours of duty by making their transitions back to civilian life as smooth as possible; and

WHEREAS, Our veterans face myriad challenges, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, a lack of job opportunities, barriers to reintegrating themselves into their families and communities, and a high incidence of substance abuse; and

WHEREAS, Tragically, many returning servicemen and women find themselves incapable of coping with these challenges – a 2012 study by the Veterans Health Administration revealed that veterans accounted for a shocking 22 percent of suicides in the United States between 1999 and 2010; and

WHEREAS, Expressed another way, the 2012 study revealed that more than 20 veterans were committing suicide every day; and

WHEREAS, In January 2014, the Veterans Health Administration released a follow-up study revealing that, in 2011, the suicide rate actually increased for all female veterans and for male veterans under 30, especially those between the ages of 18 and 24; and

WHEREAS, Since 2007, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs has taken numerous steps to reduce suicides, including the creation of the Veterans Crisis Line, a 24-hour hotline dedicated to assisting veterans on a wide range of issues; and

WHEREAS, These efforts, while important, are not enough – the men and women of the United States Armed Forces deserve far more vigorous support in gratitude for their valiant efforts in defense of our security; and

WHEREAS, Americans, operating through every level of government, should prioritize the welfare of our veterans by, among other things, allowing them ample job opportunities upon their return to civilian life, and providing any and all other forms of support necessary to make their post-military lives as rewarding and meaningful for them as their military service has been for all of us; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this fifteenth day of January, 2014, do hereby call upon the City Council's Committee on Human Relations to hold a hearing to explore what can be done to better identify the root causes of suicide among veterans, to implement strategies to reduce such suicides, and to promote education and other efforts to assist the federal government in this cause; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That representatives of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs be invited to attend the hearing and present testimony on this important and heart-rending issue.

Tom Cullerton 38

James A. Balcer
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Alderman, 11th Ward