

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 28, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
HT-2 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Carter
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Wasserman Schultz and Ranking Member Carter,

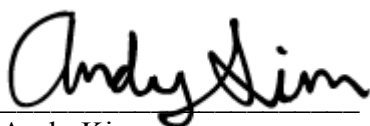
Thank you for your continued support and commitment to the health and well-being of our nation's veterans. Our veterans have made great sacrifices to ensure the safety of our nation, and we owe them the same in return.

We know you share our deep concern that the rate at which veterans are dying by suicide remains unacceptably high. As you begin work on the appropriations bill for FY 2022, we ask that you consider the 2020 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report conducted by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, which found that the suicide rate for veterans ages 18-34 increased substantially, from 25.5 suicide deaths per 100,000 in 2005 to 32 suicide deaths per 100,000 in 2017. Overall, the age-and gender-adjusted rates of suicide were 27.5 per 100,000 for veterans and 18.2 per 100,000 for non-veteran adults. With veteran suicides exceeding 6,000 each year from 2008-2018 (the most recent year of the study), there is urgent need to provide more support to our nation's veterans.

The Biden Administration has acknowledged this need by including \$542 million in the President's budget request—an increase of nearly \$230 million above the FY 2021 enacted level. Providing funding for programs that offer suicide prevention counseling and peer-to-peer outreach services has made a dramatic difference in the lives of many veterans. Significantly increasing support for such programs is vital to reducing suicides among our service members. Accordingly, we ask that you meet the funding level of at least \$542 million set out in the President's budget request for veteran suicide prevention and outreach programs.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Andy Kim
Member of Congress



John Katko
Member of Congress

Member of Congress

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