

Good Morning Senator Hecker and members of the Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs committee, my name is Steve Terrill, and I appreciate the privilege to provide my support of passing **H. B. No. 202* and "Designate Veterans Suicide Awareness Day"**.

My wife Debbie and I have the honor of being "Gold Star" parents of Sgt. Kevin Lee Terrill of the US Army. He was a bright, independent, and caring 26 year old young man. Bringing awareness to the severity of suicide is critical as it is the first step in addressing this crisis in our society,

Suicide is on a very concerning rise for all population segments as these statistics illustrate:

Suicide is the 2nd highest cause of death 10-24 yrs. old and having doubled since 2007

- Over 45,000 die of suicide each year

- 22 veterans a day take their life

Our most effective researchers continue to struggle to determine an accurate explanation of the factors and reasons why someone would take their own life. Debbie and I suffer with not understanding why our son, who we never dreamed, was of risk of suicide.

We have come to believe that some must be experiencing tremendous mental suffering and distress to take their life. This leads us to ask yourself what you know about having a healthy mind.

Doesn't it make sense we should learn to take care of our mental health as we have learned about our physical health? How do we know for ourselves or to help others?

No we wait and or self-medicate until it's a crisis with depression, addiction, or suicide. Or we hope a health professional that may have limited mental health training but still can prescribe the miracle drug, will make it alright.

To honor our son, and all other active members and Military Veterans who served our country, we have become Strong Dedicated Advocates in providing awareness

of programs that help everyone to learn to be responsible for the own mental health This is to be able to help yourself with a mental condition before it become so serious that you would resort to substance abuse, behavioral addictions, (Gambling, Porn) and or consider taking their life.

Additionally, we face a huge problem with the stigma surrounding mental health and worse with suicide. Life is real and there are some times where you cannot just look away and hope/pray it won't happen to any family or friends. There are a growing number of us who live with: "Why didn't we know to See and Help" We all can learn to be aware of signs/symptoms of someone at risk and how to help them with help. So why can't everyone take a few hours to learn to be a Gatekeeper.

With this said, I am reaching out to bring your attention to an community education effort that could make a significant impact on way we all live and reduce the rising numbers of drug and suicide deaths. Everyone can benefit in developing a basic understanding of mental health (much as we have in understanding our physical health).

I discovered course called "Mental Health First Aid" in the Lima Ohio area last year where they have trained about 2,000 people of all "walks of life", from doctors to inmates and over 1 million have completed this class in the US. Many call it the "CPR course for your mind".

Additionally, there are customized versions of the course, including one for veterans (see attached) and we are working with the Ohio County Veterans and Family Service Association to train every Ohio county staff with this course..

Therefore the critical need for public awareness of realizing the value of learning about how to take care of your own mental health and also how to help others in mental crisis.

This is why it is so important to "Designate Veterans Suicide Awareness Day", so we can bring public attention to something that many of live with every day and want reduce the growing numbers that must face it in our lives and move forward.

