



**Michael D. White** State Legislative Chairman Department of Ohio American Legion

Testimony before the Veterans and Public Safety Committee  
S.C.R No. 9 – Urge Congress support military, veteran mental health treatment

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on Senate Concurrent Resolution 9.

I am Michael White, a US Army Veteran of both Desert Storm, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. I am the State Legislative Chairman for the Department of Ohio American Legion. I am also a disabled veteran with an 80% disability rating with a portion of that rating for PTSD.

According to a report published by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in 2016, which analyzed 55 million veterans' records from 1979 to 2014, the current analysis indicates that an average of 20 veterans die from suicide per day

In 2008 I was responsible for the welfare of 750 Soldiers deployed to Iraq. My unit conducted convoy security and detainee operations for one year logging over 4 million miles on very dangerous military supply routes throughout the country. I brought home all of the Soldiers in my unit.

I can personally attest to attending memorials for over 20 of the Soldiers I was responsible for due to suicide in the time I have returned from deployment. Many of these Soldiers' lives could have been saved if there had been a comprehensive evaluation of them as they were returning from deployment. Even after 16 years there is a stigma associated with Soldiers seeking mental health treatment.

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Wilson, ranking member Craig, and committee members, I hope I can count on you to support our veterans by urging congress to support military, veteran mental health treatment and vote favorably on Senate Concurrent Resolution 9.

Thank you for allowing me to offer proponent testimony today. I am available to answer questions the committee might have.

