



(Original Signature of Member)

116TH CONGRESS

2ND SESSION

H. R.

To direct the Secretary of Defense to carry out a pilot program to preprogram suicide prevention resources into smart devices issued to members of the Armed Forces.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. JOYCE of Ohio introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Defense to carry out a pilot program to pre-program suicide prevention resources into smart devices issued to members of the Armed Forces.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Military Suicide Pre-
5 vention in the 21st Century Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Although personal electronic devices, such
2 as mobile phones, computers, and tablets, increas-
3 ingly are being leveraged as vehicles for health in the
4 civilian world, almost nothing is known about per-
5 sonal technology use among members of the Armed
6 Forces.

7 (2) The Defense Health Agency created the
8 Virtual Hope Box application to help members of
9 the Armed Forces build resilience.

10 (3) Users of the Virtual Hope Box application
11 reported significantly greater ability to cope with un-
12 pleasant emotions and thoughts.

13 (4) Members of the Armed Forces who are be-
14 havioral health patients experiencing distress, emo-
15 tional dysregulation, or suicidal ideation are often
16 separated from direct clinical support when they
17 need it.

18 (5) The Virtual Hope Box application offers a
19 highly portable, accessible, and discreet tool for ef-
20 fectively increasing coping self-efficacy.

21 (6) A strongly linked chain of care depends on
22 engaged leaders as well as highly competent first re-
23 sponders, crisis hotline workers, emergency depart-
24 ment personnel, chaplains, primary care clinicians,
25 and behavioral health clinicians.

1 **SEC. 3. PILOT PROGRAM ON PRE-PROGRAMMING OF SUI-**
2 **CIDE PREVENTION RESOURCES INTO SMART**
3 **DEVICES ISSUED TO MEMBERS OF THE**
4 **ARMED FORCES.**

5 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Commencing not later than 120
6 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
7 retary of Defense shall carry out a pilot program under
8 which the Secretary—

9 (1) pre-downloads the Virtual Hope Box appli-
10 cation of the Defense Health Agency, or successor
11 application, on smart devices individually issued to
12 members of the Armed Forces;

13 (2) pre-programs the National Suicide Hotline
14 number and Veterans Crisis Line number into the
15 contacts for such devices; and

16 (3) provides training, as part of training on sui-
17 cide awareness and prevention conducted throughout
18 the Department of Defense, on the preventative re-
19 sources described in paragraphs (1) and (2).

20 (b) **DURATION.**—The Secretary shall carry out the
21 pilot program under this section for a two-year period.

22 (c) **SCOPE.**—The Secretary shall determine the ap-
23 propriate scope of individuals participating in the pilot
24 program under this section to best represent each Armed
25 Force and to ensure a relevant sample size.

1 (d) IDENTIFICATION OF OTHER RESOURCES.—In
2 carrying out the pilot program under this section, the Sec-
3 retary shall coordinate with the Director of the Defense
4 Health Agency and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to
5 identify other useful technology-related resources for use
6 in the pilot program.

7 (e) REPORT.—Not later than 30 days after com-
8 pleting the pilot program under this section, the Secretary
9 shall submit to the Committee on Armed Services of the
10 Senate and the Committee on Armed Services of the
11 House of Representatives a report on the pilot program.

12 (f) VETERANS CRISIS LINE DEFINED.—In this sec-
13 tion, the term “Veterans Crisis Line” means the toll-free
14 hotline for veterans established under section 1720F(h) of
15 title 38, United States Code.