

**No. R-411. House concurrent resolution designating April 2018 as Veterans Suicide Awareness Month in Vermont.**

(H.C.R.337)

Offered by: Representatives Strong of Albany, Christie of Hartford, Gonzalez of Winooski, Head of South Burlington, Howard of Rutland City, Morrissey of Bennington, Read of Fayston, Scheuermann of Stowe, Sabilia of Dover, Smith of Derby, Stevens of Waterbury, and Walz of Barre City

Whereas, our nation's veterans encounter many readjustment challenges upon their reentry into civilian life, and

Whereas, most tragically, these challenges too frequently culminate in suicide, and

Whereas, although age and regional variants exist, veterans undeniably are more susceptible to suicide than the adult nonveteran population, and

Whereas, according to a September 2017 media release from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (Department), the most recently available data indicate that, after adjusting for age and sex, there is a 22 percent higher risk for veterans compared to the adult nonveteran U.S. population to succumb to suicide, and

Whereas, the Department's research documented that 65 percent of all veteran suicide victims are 50 years of age and older, and

Whereas, these statistics paint a picture that is most unfortunate and emphasize the need to focus more intensively on addressing this intolerable situation, and

Whereas, greater public awareness combined with more effective support services and treatment will be required to reverse this statistical trend, and

Whereas, one Vermonter who is making a special personal effort to help lower the veterans' suicide rate is Valerie Pallotta, whose son Josh was a veteran who succumbed to suicide, and

Whereas, she is fundraising to establish Josh's House in his memory and as a support facility to help veterans who have suicidal inclinations, and

Whereas, the designation of a month for Vermonters to pay special attention to our State's and nation's veterans who may be considering suicide will heighten public sensitivity to this continuing societal dilemma, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly designates April 2018 as Veterans Suicide Awareness Month in Vermont, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont National Guard, the Vermont Office of Veterans Affairs, and Valerie Pallotta.