

## Union Calendar No. 295

115<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION

# H. R. 4173

[Report No. 115–400]

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study on the  
Veterans Crisis Line.

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### IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 31, 2017

Mr. BANKS of Indiana (for himself, Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH, Mr. MESSER, Mr. BUCSHON, Mrs. WALORSKI, and Mr. MOULTON) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

NOVEMBER 7, 2017

Additional sponsors: Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. VISCLOSKY, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, and Ms. GABBARD

NOVEMBER 7, 2017

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole  
House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italic*]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on October 31, 2017]

# **A BILL**

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study on the Veterans Crisis Line.

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 “Veterans Crisis Line*  
5 *Study Act of 2017”.*

6 **SEC. 2. STUDY ON EFFICACY OF VETERANS CRISIS LINE.**

7 *(a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall*  
8 *conduct a study on the outcomes and the efficacy of the Vet-*  
9 *erans Crisis Line during the five-year period beginning*  
10 *January 1, 2014, based on an analysis of national suicide*  
11 *data and data collected from the Veterans Crisis Line.*

12 *(b) MATTERS INCLUDED.—The study under subsection*  
13 *(a) shall address the following:*

14 *(1) The efficacy of the Veterans Crisis Line in*  
15 *leading veterans to sustained mental health regimens,*  
16 *by determining—*

17 *(A) the number of veterans who, after con-*  
18 *tacting the Veterans Crisis Line and being re-*  
19 *ferred to a suicide prevention specialist, begin*  
20 *and continue mental health care furnished by the*  
21 *Secretary of Veterans Affairs; and*

22 *(B) the number of veterans who, after con-*  
23 *tacting the Veterans Crisis Line and being re-*  
24 *ferred to a suicide prevention specialist, either—*

1                   (i) begin mental health care furnished  
2                   by the Secretary but do not continue such  
3                   care; or

4                   (ii) do not begin such care.

5                   (2) The visibility of the Veterans Crisis Line, by  
6                   determining—

7                   (A) the number of veterans who contact the  
8                   Veterans Crisis Line and have not previously re-  
9                   ceived hospital care or medical services furnished  
10                  by the Secretary; and

11                  (B) the number of veterans who contact the  
12                  Veterans Crisis Line and have previously re-  
13                  ceived hospital care or medical services furnished  
14                  by the Secretary.

15                  (3) The role of the Veterans Crisis Line as part  
16                  of the mental health care services of the Department,  
17                  by determining, of the veterans who are enrolled in  
18                  the health care system established under section  
19                  1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, who contact  
20                  the Veterans Crisis Line, the number who are under  
21                  the care of a mental health care provider of the De-  
22                  partment at the time of such contact.

23                  (4) Whether receiving sustained mental health  
24                  care affects suicidality and whether veterans pre-  
25                  viously receiving mental health care furnished by the

1        *Secretary use the Veterans Crisis Line in times of cri-*  
2        *sis, with respect to the veterans described in para-*  
3        *graph (3), by determining the time frame between re-*  
4        *ceiving such care and the time of such contact.*

5                *(5) The effectiveness of the Veterans Crisis Line*  
6        *in assisting veterans at risk for suicide when the Vet-*  
7        *erans Crisis Line is contacted by a non-veteran, by*  
8        *determining, of the number of non-veterans who con-*  
9        *tact the Veterans Crisis Line looking for support in*  
10       *assisting a veteran, how many of such individuals re-*  
11       *ceive support in having a veteran begin to receive*  
12       *mental health care furnished by the Secretary.*

13               *(6) The overall efficacy of the Veterans Crisis*  
14       *Line in preventing suicides and whether the number*  
15       *of contacts affects the efficacy, by determining—*

16                *(A) the number of veterans who contact the*  
17        *Veterans Crisis Line who ultimately commit or*  
18        *attempt suicide; and*

19                *(B) of such veterans, how many times did*  
20        *a veteran contact the Veterans Crisis Line prior*  
21        *to committing or attempting suicide.*

22               *(7) The long-term efficacy of the Veterans Crisis*  
23       *Line in preventing repeated suicide attempts and*  
24       *whether the efficacy is temporary, by determining, of*  
25       *the number of veterans who contacted the Veterans*

1       *Crisis Line and did not commit or attempt suicide*  
2       *during the following six-month period, the number*  
3       *who contacted the Veterans Crisis Line in crisis at a*  
4       *later time and thereafter did commit or attempt sui-*  
5       *cide.*

6               (8) *Whether referral to mental health care affects*  
7       *the risk of suicide, by determining—*

8                       (A) *the number of veterans who contact the*  
9                       *Veterans Crisis Line who are not referred to, or*  
10                      *do not continue receiving, mental health care*  
11                      *who commit suicide; and*

12                     (B) *the number of veterans described in*  
13                     *paragraph (1)(A) who commit or attempt sui-*  
14                     *cide.*

15               (9) *The efficacy of the Veterans Crisis Line to*  
16       *promote continued mental health care in those vet-*  
17       *erans who are at high risk for suicide whose suicide*  
18       *was prevented, by determining, of the number of vet-*  
19       *erans who contacted the Veterans Crisis Line and did*  
20       *not commit or attempt suicide soon thereafter, the*  
21       *number that begin and continue to receive mental*  
22       *health care furnished by the Secretary.*

23               (10) *Such other matters as the Secretary deter-*  
24       *mines appropriate.*

1           (c) *RULE OF CONSTRUCTION REGARDING DATA COL-*  
2 *LECTION.*—*Nothing in this section may be construed to*  
3 *modify or affect the manner in which data is collected, or*  
4 *the kind or content of data collected, by the Secretary under*  
5 *the Veterans Crisis Line.*

6           (d) *SUBMISSION.*—*Not later than March 1, 2020, the*  
7 *Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Af-*  
8 *airs of the House of Representatives and the Senate the*  
9 *study under subsection (a).*

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

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