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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2803

March 8, 2019

Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

I write to ask for your support for effective veterans suicide prevention programs and mental health care services at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in your FY2020 budget. An estimated 20 veterans die by suicide each day. This number has reached epidemic proportions that touch every facet of American life. The veteran rate of suicide is 1.4 times higher among male veterans and almost 2 times higher among female veterans when compared with non-veteran adult men and women. Our men and women in uniform who risked everything for our freedom deserve far better from the agencies designed to protect them.

The State of Nevada is home to over 200,000 veterans who deserve fully-funded, functional, and effective programs that provide the quality of care they need for mental health services and suicide prevention. At 48.2 per 100,000 veterans, the Nevada veteran suicide rate is higher than the national veteran suicide rate of 30.1, and significantly higher than the national nonveteran rate of 17.5 per 100,000, according to the VA's 2018 veteran suicide data. Funding for veteran suicide prevention and mental health programs will save lives and protect Nevada veterans and their families. These numbers are especially troubling since these rates don't discriminate based on age or gender.

In the past two years of your Administration, these critical programs have garnered bipartisan support. The fiscal year 2019 VA appropriation allocated \$8.6 billion to mental health services, \$468 million over the fiscal year 2018 appropriation. This includes \$206.1 million for suicide prevention outreach to ensure that we are reaching as many veterans as possible. Although this funding represents a step in the right direction, I respectfully urge you to ensure veterans receive the mental health support they deserve by funding mental health and veteran suicide prevention programs at a robust level.

I look forward to working with you to reduce the high suicide rates amongst our nation's veterans.

Sincerely,

Susie Lee
Member of Congress