

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4173

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 9, 2017

Received; read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

AN ACT

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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Crisis Line
3 Study Act of 2017”.

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

5 (a) **STUDY.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall
6 conduct a study on the outcomes and the efficacy of the
7 Veterans Crisis Line during the 5-year period beginning
8 January 1, 2014, based on an analysis of national suicide
9 data and data collected from the Veterans Crisis Line.

10 (b) **MATTERS INCLUDED.**—The study under sub-
11 section (a) shall address the following:

12 (1) The efficacy of the Veterans Crisis Line in
13 leading veterans to sustained mental health regi-
14 mens, by determining—

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

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

24 (i) begin mental health care furnished
25 by the Secretary but do not continue such
26 care; or

1 (ii) do not begin such care.

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

4 (A) the number of veterans who contact
5 the Veterans Crisis Line and have not pre-
6 viously received hospital care or medical serv-
7 ices furnished by the Secretary; and

8 (B) the number of veterans who contact
9 the Veterans Crisis Line and have previously
10 received hospital care or medical services fur-
11 nished by the Secretary.

12 (3) The role of the Veterans Crisis Line as part
13 of the mental health care services of the Depart-
14 ment, by determining, of the veterans who are en-
15 rolled in the health care system established under
16 section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, who
17 contact the Veterans Crisis Line, the number who
18 are under the care of a mental health care provider
19 of the Department at the time of such contact.

20 (4) Whether receiving sustained mental health
21 care affects suicidality and whether veterans pre-
22 viously receiving mental health care furnished by the
23 Secretary use the Veterans Crisis Line in times of
24 crisis, with respect to the veterans described in para-

1 graph (3), by determining the time frame between
2 receiving such care and the time of such contact.

3 (5) The effectiveness of the Veterans Crisis
4 Line in assisting veterans at risk for suicide when
5 the Veterans Crisis Line is contacted by a non-vet-
6 eran, by determining, of the number of non-veterans
7 who contact the Veterans Crisis Line looking for
8 support in assisting a veteran, how many of such in-
9 dividuals receive support in having a veteran begin
10 to receive mental health care furnished by the Sec-
11 retary.

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

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

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

21 (7) The long-term efficacy of the Veterans Cri-
22 sis Line in preventing repeated suicide attempts and
23 whether the efficacy is temporary, by determining, of
24 the number of veterans who contacted the Veterans
25 Crisis Line and did not commit or attempt suicide

1 during the following 6-month period, the number
2 who contacted the Veterans Crisis Line in crisis at
3 a later time and thereafter did commit or attempt
4 suicide.

5 (8) Whether referral to mental health care af-
6 fects the risk of suicide, by determining—

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

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

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

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

24 (c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION REGARDING DATA COL-
25 LECTION.—Nothing in this section may be construed to

1 modify or affect the manner in which data is collected,
2 or the kind or content of data collected, by the Secretary
3 under the Veterans Crisis Line.

4 (d) SUBMISSION.—Not later than May 31, 2019, the
5 Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Af-
6 fairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate the
7 study under subsection (a).

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

Passed the House of Representatives November 8,
2017.

Attest:

KAREN L. HAAS,

Clerk.