ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 247

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED DECEMBER 2, 2021

Sponsored by:

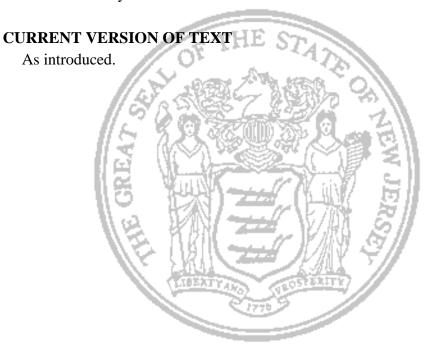
Assemblyman KEVIN J. ROONEY
District 40 (Bergen, Essex, Morris and Passaic)
Assemblyman THOMAS P. GIBLIN
District 34 (Essex and Passaic)
Assemblyman RYAN E. PETERS
District 8 (Atlantic, Burlington and Camden)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblymen Bergen, Dancer and Mukherji

SYNOPSIS

Designates September 22nd of each year as "Veterans Suicide Awareness & Remembrance Day."



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/2/2021)

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1	A JOINT RESOLUTION designating September 22 of each year as
2	"Veterans Suicide Awareness & Remembrance Day."
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4	WHEREAS, Individuals who have served in the United States military
5	made significant sacrifices to ensure that this nation and the
6	American people are safe and secure; and
7	WHEREAS, Members of the military are often deployed to remote
8	locations, far from family and friends for extended periods of time
9	and may not have regular contact with their loved ones; and
10	WHEREAS, These individuals may miss important milestones, such as
11	the birth of a child, family birthdays, and the funeral of a loved one
12	during their deployment; and
13	WHEREAS, Members of the military who are engaged in combat
14	operations face additional stresses including situations where they
15	may witness the death of fellow service members and living in
16	constant fear of their own injury or death; and
17	WHEREAS, These stress factors contribute to a sharp increase in the
18	diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder among active service
19	members and veterans; and
20	WHEREAS, Since 2010 more than 65,000 veterans and active military
21	have died by suicide, more than the total number of American
22	combat deaths from the Vietnam War and the post-9/11 conflicts
23	combined; and
24	WHEREAS, The New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans
25	Affairs, the federal Department of Veterans Affairs, and various
26	nonprofit entities provide resources to veterans and active military
27	who are at risk of suicide including telephone hotlines and mental
28	health workshops; and
29	WHEREAS, Increasing public awareness about the increased risk of
30	suicide among veterans and active military can help inform veterans
31	and military, their family, and the public about the resources
32	available to these veterans and military and help eliminate the
33	stigma associated with mental health treatments; and
34	WHEREAS, Designating September 22nd of each year as "Veterans
35	Suicide Awareness & Remembrance Day" will raise our continued
36	awareness to this critical threat to the health and safety of
37	individuals who have sacrificed so much for their fellow Americans
38	in service of our beloved country; now, therefore,
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40	BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate and General Assembly of the
41	State of New Jersey:
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43	1. September 22nd of each year is designated as "Veterans
44	Suicide Awareness & Remembrance Day" in the State of New
45	Jersey and is a day to recognize, remember, and honor the Veterans
46	and Active Military who died by suicide as well as to honor,
47	respect, and unite their families. It is a day to forever remember

their lives and service to our state and nation.

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2. The Legislature requests the Governor to annually issue a proclamation calling upon public officials and the citizens of this State to observe "Veterans Suicide Awareness & Remembrance Day" with appropriate activities and programs.

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3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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This joint resolution designates September 22nd of each year as "Veterans Suicide Awareness & Remembrance Day" in New Jersey. By having an annual observance, we elevate the public health challenge of the increased suicide rates of veterans and active duty military personnel into the public consciousness and raise our continued awareness to this challenge. This continued awareness facilitates discussion about Veteran/Military suicide, thereby taking away the societal stigma associated with mental health treatment. By normalizing the subject of mental health among Veterans and Active Military, we will allow them to receive necessary treatment without fear of judgment while simultaneously showing that we care as a State and nation, about preventing living Veterans and Active Military from dying by suicide. The joint resolution calls on the Governor to annually issue a proclamation calling on the people of this State to mark this day with appropriate activities and programs.

Individuals who have served in the United States military made significant sacrifices to defend the United States and its people. Members of the military are often deployed to remote locations far from family and friends and may not have regular contact with their loved ones. During their deployments these individuals can miss important milestones including the birth of a child, family birthdays, or the funeral of a loved one. Members of the military engaged in combat operations face added stresses including situations where they may witness the death of their fellow service members and living in constant fear of their own injury or death. These stress factors contribute to a sharp increase in the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress among service members and United States military and veterans. Since 2010 more than 65,000 veterans and active military have died by suicide, more than the total number of American combat deaths from the Vietnam War and the post-9/11 conflicts combined. The New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, the federal Department of Veterans Affairs, and various nonprofit entities provide resources to veterans and active military who are at risk of suicide including telephone hotlines and mental health workshops. Increasing public awareness about the increased risk of suicide amongst veterans and military can help inform veterans, their families, and the public about the resources

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1 available to these veterans and military and help eliminate the stigma associated with mental health treatments. 2 September 22nd of each year as "Veterans Suicide Awareness & 3 Remembrance Day" will raise our continued awareness to this 4 5 critical threat to the health and safety of individuals who have 6 sacrificed so much for their fellow Americans in service of our 7 beloved country. This annual observance originated with Kevin W. 8 Hertell, a U.S. Air Force Veteran who lost his cousin to suicide in 9 2016, Senior Airman Robert McRae Dean, U.S. Air Force. Mr. Hertell established this observance to recognize and forever 10 remember the life and death of Senior Airman Robert McRae Dean 11 12 and all other Veterans and Active Military members who have died 13 by suicide.