

## Wounded Warrior Project Applauds U.S. House Passage of Key Mental Health Legislation



Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) applauds the recent passage of several critical pieces of mental health legislation through the U.S. House of Representatives.

### **[The Effective Suicide Screening and Assessment in the Emergency Department Act](#)**

The Effective Suicide Screening and Assessment in the Emergency Department Act, H.R.1324, sponsored by Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL-12) and Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL-09), would help identify and assess individuals at risk of suicide and provide follow-up care and long-term treatment.

### **[Improving Mental Health Access from the Emergency Department Act](#)**

The Improving Mental Health Access from the Emergency Department Act, H.R. 1205, sponsored by Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-CA-36), would increase access to follow-up psychiatric services for individuals who have gone to an emergency room for help with severe mental health episodes. Through a new grant program, emergency departments will be able to apply for funds to implement a range of innovative approaches designed to expeditiously transition individuals to appropriate treatment facilities, increase the supply of inpatient psychiatric beds, and implement proactive follow-up outreach.

### **[Helping Emergency Responders Overcome \(HERO\) Act](#)**

The Helping Emergency Responders Overcome (HERO) Act, H.R. 1480, sponsored by Rep. Ami Bera (D-CA-07), would improve the detection, prevention, and treatment of mental health issues among first responders. This legislation would better identify first responder suicide rates and interventions, establish peer-support behavioral health and wellness programs, and develop best practices on the prevention and treatment of post-traumatic stress.

### **[The Suicide Prevention Lifeline Improvement Act of 2021](#)**

Last Congress, WWP advocated to designate 9-8-8 as the new universal suicide prevention hotline telephone number. The Suicide Prevention Lifeline Improvement Act of 2021, H.R. 2981, sponsored by Rep. John Katko (R-NY-24), would strengthen the services provided by the hotline and introduce a pilot program to use other

communications platforms like social media and texting for suicide prevention.

These four pieces of legislation now move on to the Senate.

“The need for mental health care and community resources could not be more important than it is today,” said Jose Ramos, vice president of government and community relations. “Anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) continue to be three of the top five most prevalent issues reported by the warriors we serve. For this reason, mental health remains a top priority for Wounded Warrior Project. We are committed to working with our partners in the military and veteran community and leaders in Congress and the White House to ensure these important bills are signed into law and to ensure veterans receive the care they have earned.”

Read WWP’s [testimony before the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs committees](#), where we outlined our key legislative priorities for 2021. And learn more about WWP’s other [legislative priorities](#) and how we work with our nation’s leaders to improve the lives of wounded veterans and their families.

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### **About Wounded Warrior Project**

Since 2003, Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) has been meeting the growing needs of warriors, their families, and caregivers — helping them achieve their highest ambition. [Learn more.](#)

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