

111TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 1308

To direct the Secretary of Defense to adopt a program of professional and confidential screenings to detect mental health injuries acquired during deployment in support of a contingency operation and ultimately to reduce the incidence of suicide among veterans.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 4, 2009

Mr. MCMAHON (for himself, Mr. ROONEY, and Mr. PERRIELLO) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Defense to adopt a program of professional and confidential screenings to detect mental health injuries acquired during deployment in support of a contingency operation and ultimately to reduce the incidence of suicide among veterans.

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 Mental  
5       Health Screening and Assessment Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

2 It is the sense of Congress that—

3 (1) the increasing rate of suicide among vet-  
4 erans returning from Operation Enduring Freedom  
5 and Operation Iraqi Freedom is a serious problem;  
6 and

7 (2) the Secretary of Defense should conduct  
8 mandatory, face-to-face and confidential mental  
9 health and traumatic brain injury screenings by a li-  
10 censed medical professional, for each member of the  
11 Armed Forces, during the period beginning 90 days  
12 after the date on which the member completes a de-  
13 ployment in support of a contingency operation and  
14 ending 180 days after such date.

15 **SEC. 3. MANDATORY, FACE-TO-FACE AND CONFIDENTIAL**  
16 **SCREENINGS FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION**  
17 **AMONG VETERANS.**

18 (a) MANDATORY SCREENINGS.—The Secretary of  
19 Defense shall carry out a mandatory, face-to-face, and  
20 confidential mental health and traumatic brain injury  
21 screening conducted by a licensed medical professional, for  
22 each member of the Armed Forces, during the period be-  
23 ginning 90 days after the date on which the member com-  
24 pletes a deployment in support of a contingency operation  
25 and ending 180 days after such date.

1       (b) REQUIREMENTS OF SCREENING.—The screenings  
2 required by subsection (a) shall be designed to—

3           (1) provide the members of the Armed Forces  
4 with an objective mental health and traumatic brain  
5 injury standard to screen for suicide risk factors;

6           (2) ease the members' transitions by allowing  
7 them to be honest in their assessments;

8           (3) battle the stigma of depression and mental  
9 health problems among service personnel and vet-  
10 erans; and

11          (4) ultimately reduce the prevalence of suicide  
12 among veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Op-  
13 eration Enduring Freedom.

14       (c) RETURN TO UNITED STATES.—The Secretary of  
15 Defense may not prohibit a member of the Armed Forces  
16 from returning to the United States by reason of any re-  
17 sult or determination made pursuant to a screening con-  
18 ducted under subsection (a).

19       (d) REQUIREMENT FOR DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
20 AND DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO SHARE IN-  
21 FORMATION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH SCREENINGS.—  
22 Pursuant to and consistent with requirements of the  
23 Wounded Warrior Act (title IV of Public Law 110–181;  
24 10 U.S.C. 1071 note), and section 1614 of that Act in  
25 particular, and section 1720F of title 38, United States

1 Code, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Vet-  
2 erans Affairs shall establish a joint protocol to share exist-  
3 ing and future reports from confidential mental health  
4 screenings conducted under this section to help aid mem-  
5 bers of the Armed Forces in their transition from health  
6 care and treatment provided by the Department of De-  
7 fense to health care and treatment provided by the De-  
8 partment of Veterans Affairs.

9 (e) CONTINGENCY OPERATION.—for the purposes of  
10 this Act, the term “contingency operation” has the mean-  
11 ing given that term under section 101(13) of title 10,  
12 United States Code.

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