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ENGROSSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1181

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State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

**By** House Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Orwall, Boehnke, Callan, Leavitt, Davis, Dolan, Valdez, Young, Riccelli, Lekanoff, Barkis, Peterson, Shewmake, Bronoske, Macri, and Morgan)

READ FIRST TIME 02/07/22.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing programs and measures to prevent  
2 suicide among veterans and military members; adding new sections to  
3 chapter 43.60A RCW; adding a new section to chapter 18.130 RCW;  
4 adding a new section to chapter 43.70 RCW; adding a new section to  
5 chapter 46.18 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 74.04 RCW; adding  
6 a new section to chapter 9.41 RCW; adding a new section to chapter  
7 39.04 RCW; creating new sections; providing effective dates; and  
8 providing an expiration date.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) Suicide is a public health issue that  
11 affects many Washington families and communities daily. Over the last  
12 10 years, Washington state has been at the forefront of suicide  
13 prevention, investing more in upstream suicide prevention strategies  
14 and supports with the goal of a noteworthy reduction in suicide by  
15 2025.

16 (2) At the request of the governor, in 2020 Washington  
17 stakeholders engaged in a national and statewide initiative to end  
18 veteran and military member suicide. This initiative culminated in a  
19 new state plan to educate providers and help them address the unique  
20 needs of veterans and military members, particularly those in  
21 transition to civilian life; and to provide resources and supports

1 including improved lethal means safety training. The purpose of this  
2 act is to support the implementation of that plan.

3 (3) Service members, veterans, and their families are at a higher  
4 risk of being affected by suicide as experiences prior to enlistment,  
5 during service, and transition from service can contribute to  
6 suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

7 (4) Washington is home to 544,290 veterans, 60,699 active duty  
8 service members, 17,941 guard and reserve service members, and  
9 2,000,000 military and veteran family members. Although veterans  
10 themselves make up only seven percent of the Washington population,  
11 they account for 19 percent of total suicides in the state. Nearly  
12 1,000 veterans have died by suicide in Washington state over the last  
13 five years. More than two-thirds of veterans who died by suicide in  
14 Washington used a firearm.

15 (5) Family members of veterans who die by suicide are at higher  
16 risk for future suicide due to the exposure of experiencing suicide  
17 loss. Research shows for every suicide that occurs, 135 people suffer  
18 from the effects either directly or indirectly, meaning veteran  
19 suicides impact a community of 2,600,000 people.

20 (6) There is no one path to suicide, but life experiences, moral  
21 injury, trauma, culture, and health can play a major role in suicidal  
22 behavior. Military and veteran culture in particular includes stigma  
23 around mental wellness and help-seeking behavior, emphasizes  
24 reliability on group cohesion, and facilitates access,  
25 comfortability, and familiarity with lethal means such as firearms.  
26 Additionally, a significant number of veterans do not seek care  
27 within the veterans administration system.

28 (7) The legislature intends to address the tragedy of suicide  
29 amongst veterans, military members, and their families through  
30 support of professionals and community and peer organizations serving  
31 veterans, cultural changes that support help-seeking behaviors, and  
32 investments in education, training, prevention, and care.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.60A  
34 RCW to read as follows:

35 (1) There is created in the department a suicide prevention  
36 community-based services grant program. The purpose of the grant  
37 program is to provide suicide prevention, peer support, and other  
38 assistance to at-risk and transitioning veterans and military members  
39 and their families in their communities.

1 (2) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for the  
2 specific purposes provided in this section and amounts disbursed from  
3 the veterans and military members suicide prevention account created  
4 in section 3 of this act, the department, in consultation with the  
5 forefront suicide prevention center, must establish a process to  
6 receive, review, process, and award grants to organizations,  
7 including nonprofit and peer support community programs, that address  
8 veterans, military members, and their families who may be at risk of  
9 suicide and other mental health crises. Priority should be given to  
10 organizations using peer support models that use evidence-based,  
11 research-based, or promising practices.

12 (3) The department shall report to the legislature annually  
13 beginning July 1, 2023, on grant recipients, number of veterans and  
14 military members served, and the types of services offered by grant  
15 recipients.

16 (4) The forefront suicide prevention center shall evaluate the  
17 effectiveness of each grant program recipient providing suicide  
18 prevention and peer support services to veterans, military members,  
19 and their families who may be at risk of suicide and other mental  
20 health crises.

21 (5) For the purposes of this section, "forefront suicide  
22 prevention center" means the University of Washington's forefront  
23 suicide prevention center of excellence.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 43.60A  
25 RCW to read as follows:

26 (1) The veterans and military members suicide prevention account  
27 is created in the custody of the state treasurer. The account shall  
28 consist of funds appropriated by the legislature, revenues received  
29 from the prevent veteran suicide emblem under section 8 of this act,  
30 and all receipts from gifts, grants, bequests, devises, or other  
31 donations from public and private sources to support veterans and  
32 military members suicide prevention measures. Expenditures from the  
33 account may be used only for the purposes provided in subsection (3)  
34 of this section. Only the director or the director's designee may  
35 authorize expenditures from the account. The account is subject to  
36 allotment procedures under chapter 43.88 RCW, but an appropriation is  
37 not required for expenditures.

38 (2) (a) The department may request and accept nondedicated  
39 contributions, grants, or gifts in cash or otherwise, and voluntary

1 donations for deposit into the account, including funds generated by  
2 voluntary donations under (b) of this subsection.

3 (b) The department may accept, for deposit into the account,  
4 voluntary donations from persons who are: (i) Applying for a  
5 concealed pistol license or renewal of a concealed pistol license; or  
6 (ii) undergoing a background check under chapter 9.41 RCW in  
7 connection with the purchase of a firearm from a firearms dealer. The  
8 department shall coordinate with local law enforcement agencies, the  
9 department of licensing, and firearms dealers licensed under chapter  
10 9.41 RCW to develop a form and process for publicizing and collecting  
11 voluntary donations under this subsection. The department and the  
12 department of licensing shall post educational information regarding  
13 the voluntary donation provisions of this section on their websites.

14 (3) All moneys deposited into the account must be used for  
15 activities that are dedicated to the benefit of veteran and military  
16 member suicide education and prevention including, but not limited  
17 to: (a) Expanding the department's peer corps program; and (b)  
18 providing programs, peer support, and services that assist veterans  
19 and military members in addressing mental health and wellness impacts  
20 of military service, trauma, moral injury, and transition to civilian  
21 life. Funds may also be used for the suicide prevention community-  
22 based services grant program established in section 2 of this act.  
23 Funds from the account may not be used to supplant existing funds  
24 received by the department nor shall grant recipients use the funds  
25 to supplant existing funding.

26 (4) For the purposes of this section the following definitions  
27 apply:

28 (a) "Veteran" has the same meaning as provided in RCW 41.04.005  
29 and 41.04.007.

30 (b) "Military members" means actively serving members of the  
31 national guard or reserves, or active duty military personnel.

32 (c) "Account" means the veterans and military members suicide  
33 prevention account.

34 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 43.60A  
35 RCW to read as follows:

36 Beginning December 2022, subject to the availability of amounts  
37 appropriated for this specific purpose, the governor's challenge team  
38 and service members, veterans, and their families suicide prevention  
39 advisory committee shall report to the legislature on a biannual

1 basis regarding implementation of the plan developed by the  
2 committee.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 43.60A  
4 RCW to read as follows:

5 Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
6 specific purpose, the department shall:

7 (1) Create and maintain a database of information on nonprofit,  
8 for-profit, city, county, state, and federal organizations,  
9 providers, and resources that address the mental health, well-being,  
10 and suicide prevention of veterans, military members, and their  
11 families. The department shall establish criteria for inclusion in  
12 the database by July 1, 2022. The department must make the database  
13 accessible on its website to veterans, military members, and their  
14 families by July 1, 2023;

15 (2) Provide suicide prevention education training and information  
16 for veterans, military members, and their families that is accessible  
17 through the internet; and

18 (3) By December 1, 2023, create, in consultation with the  
19 suicide-safer homes task force, a web-based application to be shared  
20 by state agencies and primary care providers with veterans, military  
21 members, and their families to provide applicable information and  
22 resources including but not limited to benefits, mental health  
23 resources, and lethal means safety information.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** A new section is added to chapter 18.130  
25 RCW to read as follows:

26 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
27 specific purpose, the department shall consult with the department of  
28 veterans affairs to create educational materials informing health  
29 care providers regulated under this chapter about the availability of  
30 the nationwide 988 phone number for individuals in crisis to connect  
31 with suicide prevention and mental health crisis counselors. The  
32 educational materials must include information about the veterans  
33 crisis line for veterans and service members, and, beginning July 1,  
34 2023, information about the resources developed under section 5 of  
35 this act.

36 (2) The department shall:

37 (a) Determine the health professions to which this section shall  
38 apply; and

1 (b) Collaborate with the corresponding disciplining authority  
2 under RCW 18.130.020 to ensure that the educational materials are  
3 distributed electronically to appropriate licensed health care  
4 providers when a provider renews his or her license.

5 (3) Beginning July 1, 2023, all health care providers are  
6 strongly encouraged to inquire with new patients entering care  
7 whether the patient is a veteran, member of the military, or a family  
8 member of a veteran or member of the military. If the patient  
9 responds in the affirmative, the provider is encouraged to share the  
10 educational materials created under this section with the patient.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** A new section is added to chapter 43.70  
12 RCW to read as follows:

13 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
14 specific purpose, a suicide-safer homes task force is established to  
15 raise public awareness and increase suicide prevention education  
16 among new partners who are in key positions to help reduce suicide.  
17 The task force shall be administered and staffed by the department of  
18 veterans affairs. To the extent possible, the task force membership  
19 should include representatives from geographically diverse and  
20 priority populations, including tribal populations.

21 (2) The suicide-safer homes task force shall be cochaired by the  
22 director, or the director's designee, of the department of veterans  
23 affairs and the director, or the director's designee, of the  
24 forefront suicide prevention center and also consist of the following  
25 members:

26 (a) Two representatives of suicide prevention organizations,  
27 selected by the cochairs of the task force;

28 (b) Two representatives of the firearms industry, selected by the  
29 cochairs of the task force;

30 (c) Two individuals who are suicide attempt survivors or who have  
31 experienced suicide loss, selected by the cochairs of the task force;

32 (d) Two representatives of law enforcement agencies, selected by  
33 the cochairs of the task force;

34 (e) One representative from the department of health;

35 (f) One representative from the department of fish and wildlife;

36 (g) One individual representing veterans;

37 (h) One member of a Washington or federally recognized Indian  
38 tribe;

39 (i) Two veterans;

- 1 (j) One representative of the national rifle association;
- 2 (k) One representative of the Second Amendment foundation;
- 3 (l) One representative of a nonprofit organization working on gun  
4 safety issues;
- 5 (m) One representative of a national firearms trade association;
- 6 (n) One representative of a Washington state pharmacy  
7 association; and
- 8 (o) No more than five other interested parties, selected by the  
9 cochairs of the task force.
- 10 (3) The department of veterans affairs shall convene the initial  
11 meeting of the task force.
- 12 (4) The task force shall:
- 13 (a) Develop and prepare to disseminate online trainings on  
14 suicide awareness and prevention for firearms dealers and their  
15 employees and firearm range owners and their employees;
- 16 (b) Partner with medical providers, firearms dealers, firearms  
17 ranges, and pharmacies to develop and distribute suicide awareness  
18 and prevention messages for posters and brochures;
- 19 (c) In consultation with the department of fish and wildlife,  
20 develop strategies for creating and disseminating suicide awareness  
21 and prevention information for hunting safety classes, including  
22 messages to parents that can be shared during online registration, in  
23 either follow-up email communications, or in writing, or both;
- 24 (d) Create a website that will be a clearinghouse for the newly  
25 created suicide awareness and prevention materials developed by the  
26 task force;
- 27 (e) Continue to support medical providers with suicide prevention  
28 and awareness work through the dissemination of collateral education  
29 programs;
- 30 (f) Allocate funding towards the purchase of lock boxes for  
31 dissemination via the forefront suicide prevention center's TeleSAFER  
32 program;
- 33 (g) Develop and direct advocacy efforts with firearms dealers to  
34 pair suicide awareness and prevention training with distribution of  
35 safe storage devices;
- 36 (h) Partner with a statewide pharmacy association to market and  
37 promote medication disposal kits and safe storage devices;
- 38 (i) Train health care providers on suicide awareness and  
39 prevention, paired with distribution of medication disposal kits and  
40 safe storage devices; and

1 (j) Train local law enforcement officers on suicide awareness and  
2 prevention, paired with distribution of medication disposal kits and  
3 safe storage devices.

4 (5) The forefront suicide prevention center shall provide subject  
5 matter expertise, technical and programmatic support, and  
6 consultation and evaluation to the task force.

7 (6) Beginning December 1, 2022, the task force shall annually  
8 report to the legislature on the status of its work.

9 (7) This section expires July 1, 2024.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** A new section is added to chapter 46.18  
11 RCW to read as follows:

12 (1) The general public may purchase a prevent veteran suicide  
13 emblem for a prescribed fee set by the department. The emblem must be  
14 displayed on license plates in the manner described by the  
15 department, existing vehicular registration procedures, and current  
16 laws.

17 (2) The department, in creating the prevent veteran suicide  
18 emblem, must consult with the department of veterans affairs on the  
19 design of the emblem. The emblem must incorporate the 988 suicide  
20 prevention hotline or its successor.

21 (3) Revenues from the prevent veteran suicide emblem must be  
22 deposited into the veterans and military members suicide prevention  
23 account created in section 3 of this act.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** A new section is added to chapter 74.04  
25 RCW to read as follows:

26 During the application process for public assistance benefits,  
27 the department shall inquire of each applicant whether he or she has  
28 ever served in the United States military services or is a family or  
29 household member of someone who has ever served in the United States  
30 military services. If the applicant answers in the affirmative, the  
31 department shall provide the applicant with information on how to  
32 contact the Washington department of veterans affairs to inquire as  
33 to whether the applicant may be eligible for any benefits, services,  
34 or programs offered to veterans, military members, or their families.

35 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** A new section is added to chapter 9.41  
36 RCW to read as follows:



1 (1) In order to better prevent suicide by veterans, military  
2 members, and their families, an expansion of safe storage of firearms  
3 and reduced access to lethal means in the community is encouraged.

4 (2) A dealer who provides a service of allowing a person to  
5 temporarily store a firearm on the dealer's premises in a storage  
6 locker, box, or container that is locked and not accessible to the  
7 dealer does not thereby create a special relationship, for civil  
8 liability purposes, between the dealer and the person who temporarily  
9 stores the firearm on the dealer's premises.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 11.** A new section is added to chapter 39.04  
11 RCW to read as follows:

12 (1)(a) For any building, bridge, ferry, or park being constructed  
13 or replaced after July 1, 2024, as a public works project, there must  
14 be installed in appropriate locations signs displaying the 988  
15 national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline.

16 (b) The public body as defined in RCW 39.10.210 in control of a  
17 public works project in this subsection must decide where signs under  
18 this section would be physically feasible and appropriate. The  
19 following facilities are recommended to have such signs:

20 (i) Bridges where suicides by jumping have occurred or are likely  
21 to occur; and

22 (ii) Locations that provide services to people that have high  
23 incidence of suicide or mental health conditions that would benefit  
24 from knowing about the hotline.

25 (c) The signs must be designed to communicate that dialing 988 on  
26 a telephone will connect callers to behavioral health and suicide  
27 prevention services as provided in accordance with state and federal  
28 laws governing the 988 number.

29 (d) If a sign is located along a state highway or the interstate  
30 system, the department of transportation must approve the location  
31 prior to erecting the sign, but no permit is necessary.

32 (e) Signs created under this section may not conflict with  
33 provisions of the manual of uniform traffic control devices or  
34 existing state laws related to placement and design of signs.

35 (2) Nothing contained in this section shall be construed as  
36 conferring a right of action in cases where no right of action exists  
37 independent of this section. This section is not intended to create a  
38 private right of action by any party or be used to impose liability  
39 on the public body if a sign has or has not been posted on the

1 premises of the public facility or in any particular location  
2 recommended in this section.

3 (3) The public body may accept gifts or donations to pay for the  
4 creation, installation, or maintenance of signs under this section.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 12.** Section 11 of this act takes effect July  
6 1, 2024.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 13.** Section 8 of this act takes effect  
8 October 1, 2022.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 14.** If specific funding for the purposes of  
10 this act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not  
11 provided by June 30, 2022, in the omnibus appropriations act, this  
12 act is null and void.

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