



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

PROCLAMATION NUMBER 116 JBE 2020

VETERAN AND MILITARY SUICIDE PREVENTION

- WHEREAS,** suicide is a national public health challenge that causes immeasurable pain among individuals, families, and communities across the country;
- WHEREAS,** the number of Veteran and Military suicides has exceeded 6,000 each year from 2008-2017;
- WHEREAS,** suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States, 2nd for people ages 10-35, and on average 129 Americans die by suicide each day accounting for 47,173 suicide deaths in 2017;
- WHEREAS,** on March 5, 2019, the President signed Executive Order 13861 calling for the development of a comprehensive plan to empower Veterans and end suicide through coordinated suicide prevention efforts, prioritized research activities, and strengthened collaboration across the public and private sectors. This plan is known as the President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide or PREVENTS (the "Roadmap");
- WHEREAS,** for every individual who feels alone, ashamed, or believes that they would be a burden if their thoughts or feelings were shared, there are scores of others in every community who want to help but are not sure how;
- WHEREAS,** Louisiana businesses are in the unique position to leverage the learnings from our employees, including Veterans, to encourage a national discussion on mental health and wellbeing in the workplace, and collaborate on meaningful solutions;
- WHEREAS,** the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families that brings together interagency teams to address Veteran suicide at the state level;
- WHEREAS,** the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs recognizes the importance of connecting with veterans to provide education and resources regarding suicide prevention;
- WHEREAS,** annually, the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs includes training about suicide prevention to its veterans assistance counselors who work in parish service offices across the state interacting with Louisiana veterans on a daily basis;
- WHEREAS,** in addition, the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs will host its annual Suicide Prevention Summit virtually on Friday, September 18, 2020 to increase understanding of suicide, its prevalence and risk factors for veteran populations and to assist veterans in acquiring tools for prevention, assessment and intervention; and

WHEREAS, the PREVENTS national public health campaign REACH, will seek to increase awareness of mental health issues and suicide prevention to reduce suicide for all Americans.

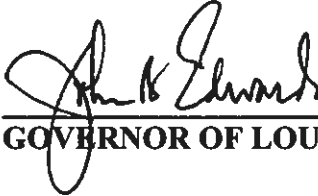
NOW THEREFORE, I, JOHN BEL EDWARDS, Governor of the State of Louisiana, by virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Louisiana, do hereby proclaim:

SECTION 1: The State of Louisiana supports the implementation of the PREVENTS “Roadmap” to help identify Veterans and other citizens in need of care, develop best practices around mental health, prioritize mental health in the workplace, participate in the Governor’s, Mayor’s, or other similar coordinated challenges or efforts available in the State, and promote the REACH National Public Health Campaign.

SECTION 2: All citizens, Government agencies, nonprofit organizations, corporations, health care providers, first responders, the criminal justice community, institutions of higher learning, the faith-based community, the Arts community, and the research sector in the great State of Louisiana are urged to raise awareness of mental health, suicide prevention, lethal means safety, and support services available in their communities and encourage all those in need to REACH to access help, hope, and community.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand officially and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of Louisiana in the City of Baton Rouge on this 4th day of September, 2020.



GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA

**ATTEST BY THE SECRETARY
OF STATE**

SECRETARY OF STATE