

MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(3)

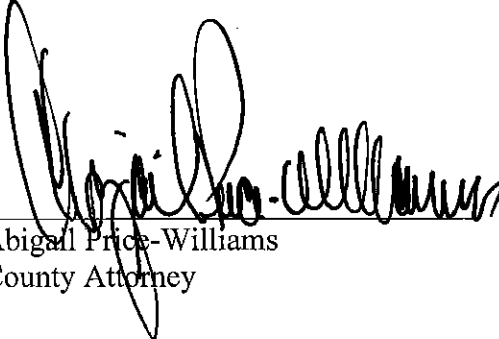
TO: Honorable Chairman Esteban L. Bovo, Jr.
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: February 21, 2018

FROM: Abigail Price-Williams
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Resolution urging the United States Congress to enact the Veterans Crisis Line Study Act of 2017, S. 2174, or similar legislation that would authorize a study of the Veterans Crisis Line

The accompanying resolution was prepared and placed on the agenda at the request of Prime Sponsor Commissioner Jose "Pepe" Diaz.



Abigail Price-Williams
County Attorney

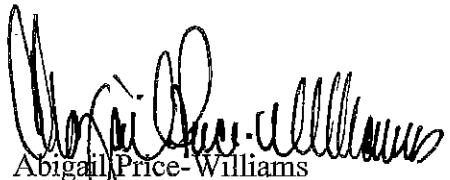
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MEMORANDUM
(Revised)

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Please note any items checked.

- "3-Day Rule" for committees applicable if raised
- 6 weeks required between first reading and public hearing
- 4 weeks notification to municipal officials required prior to public hearing
- Decreases revenues or increases expenditures without balancing budget
- Budget required
- Statement of fiscal impact required
- Statement of social equity required
- Ordinance creating a new board requires detailed County Mayor's report for public hearing
- No committee review
- Applicable legislation requires more than a majority vote (i.e., 2/3's ____, 3/5's ____, unanimous ____) to approve
- Current information regarding funding source, index code and available balance, and available capacity (if debt is contemplated) required

Approved _____ Mayor
Veto _____
Override _____

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(3)
2-21-18

RESOLUTION NO. _____

RESOLUTION URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS
TO ENACT THE VETERANS CRISIS LINE STUDY ACT OF
2017, S. 2174, OR SIMILAR LEGISLATION THAT WOULD
AUTHORIZE A STUDY OF THE VETERANS CRISIS LINE

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2015, there were 18.8 million veterans in the nation; and

WHEREAS, these courageous men and women served in the Korean War, World War II, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, and every other operation that involved members of the U.S. Armed Forces, and also served in times of peace; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (“VA”) is responsible for providing vital services to America’s veterans, which include health care services, benefits programs and access to national cemeteries to former military personnel and their dependents; and

WHEREAS, the VA recognizes that some veterans suffer from a wide range of mental or physical conditions, including, but not limited to depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (“PTSD”), burns, loss of limbs, traumatic brain injuries, intermittent explosive disorder, suicidal thoughts and a host of other mental or physical disabilities, illnesses or disorders; and

WHEREAS, research shows that veterans suffer from some mental illnesses at higher rates than the general population; and

WHEREAS, for instance, while PTSD is not unique to veterans, veterans comprise a disproportionate amount of the population living with PTSD because of their increased exposure to traumatic situations; and

WHEREAS, statistics compiled by the VA indicate that 11 to 20 percent of veterans that served in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, 12 percent of veterans that served in Desert Storm and 15 percent of veterans that served in the Vietnam War have PTSD, as compared to 7 to 8 percent of the general population; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, although veterans constituted 8.5 percent of the population, they accounted for 18 percent of all deaths from suicide among adults in the United States; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2016 report published by the VA, which reviewed records from every state in the nation and analyzed 55 million veterans' records from 1979 to 2014, approximately 20 veterans die from suicide every day; and

WHEREAS, among other things, the VA operates the nation's largest integrated health care system, with more than 1,700 health care clinics, counseling centers and other facilities; and

WHEREAS, in an effort to reduce veteran suicide, the VA also offers a free and confidential Veterans Crisis Line ("Crisis Line") that is available 24 hours a day and seven days a week via telephone call, text message or online chat for veterans and service members in emotional crisis, or any person concerned about a veteran; and

WHEREAS, Crisis Line callers seek assistance for a wide array of problems or concerns, some of which are critical and require urgent attention and emergency services, ranging from referrals to appropriate community resources, local VA facilities or emergency personnel being sent to a veteran's home for immediate help; and

WHEREAS, in February 2016, the VA's Office of Inspector General reported that more than one-third of calls and electronic communications to the Crisis Line were not being answered by front-line staffers, if at all, because of poor work habits and other problems; and

WHEREAS, in light of said allegations, the 114th Congress approved H.R. 5392, the No Veterans Crisis Line Call Should Go Unanswered Act (the “Act”), which was subsequently signed into law by President Barack Obama on November 28, 2016; and

WHEREAS, the Act directed the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (the “Secretary”) to develop a quality assurance document to improve the Crisis Line and a plan to ensure that each communication received by the Crisis Line is answered in a timely manner by a qualified responder; and

WHEREAS, on November 30, 2017, Senator Todd Young (R-IN) introduced the Veterans Crisis Line Study Act, S. 2174, which directs the Secretary to conduct a study of the outcomes and efficacy of the Veterans Crisis Line during the five-year period beginning January 1, 2014 and to submit such study to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives no later than March 1, 2020; and

WHEREAS, specifically, among other things, the study will evaluate:

- (1) whether veterans who contact the Crisis Line begin or continue mental health care furnished by VA and the number of veterans that begin and discontinue such care;
- (2) the visibility of the Crisis Line by determining the number of veterans who contact the Crisis Line and differentiate between those who have and have not previously received VA hospital care or medical services;
- (3) the role of Crisis Line as part of the VA’s mental health care services, by identifying veterans who are under the care of a mental health care provider when they contact the Crisis Line;
- (4) whether sustained mental health care affects suicidality and whether veterans who previously received mental health care from the VA use the Crisis Line during times of crisis; and

(5) The effectiveness of the Crisis Line in preventing repeated suicide attempts and suicides; and

WHEREAS, enactment of the Veterans Crisis Line Study Act will provide quantifiable and quantitative data to measure whether improvements to the Crisis Line have occurred since the VA's Office of Inspector General's February 2016 report and passage of the No Veterans Crisis Line Call Should Go Unanswered Act, and the overall capacity of the Crisis Line to help veterans who would benefit from mental health care,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, that this Board:

Section 1. Approves the foregoing recitals, which are incorporated herein by reference.

Section 2. Urges the United States Congress to enact the Veterans Crisis Line Study Act of 2017, S. 2174, or similar legislation that would authorize a study of the Veterans Crisis Line.

Section 3. Directs the Clerk of the Board to transmit a certified copy of this resolution to Senator Todd Young, the Members of the Florida Congressional Delegation and the United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Section 4. Directs the County's federal lobbyists to advocate for the legislative action set forth in Section 2 above, and authorizes and directs the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs to include this item in the 2018 Federal Legislative Package when it is presented to the Board.

Esteban L. Bovo, Jr., Chairman
Audrey M. Edmonson, Vice Chairwoman
Bruno A. Barreiro
Jose "Pepe" Diaz
Barbara J. Jordan
Jean Monestime
Rebeca Sosa
Xavier L. Suarez
Daniella Levine Cava
Sally A. Heyman
Joe A. Martinez
Dennis C. Moss
Sen. Javier D. Souto

The Chairperson thereupon declared the resolution duly passed and adopted this 21st day of February, 2018. This resolution shall become effective upon the earlier of (1) 10 days after the date of its adoption unless vetoed by the County Mayor, and if vetoed, shall become effective only upon an override by this Board, or (2) approval by the County Mayor of this Resolution and the filing of this approval with the Clerk of the Board.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
BY ITS BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HARVEY RUVIN, CLERK

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

Approved by County Attorney as
to form and legal sufficiency.



Shanika A. Graves