

# MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(8)

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**TO:** Honorable Chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz  
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

**DATE:** February 2, 2021

**FROM:** Geri Bonzon-Keenan  
Successor County Attorney

**SUBJECT:** Resolution urging the Florida Legislature to adopt House Memorial 71 or similar legislation urging the United States Congress to recognize the epidemic of suicide among veterans and fully fund suicide prevention efforts by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs; and urging the United States Congress to fully fund the United States Department of Veterans Affairs suicide prevention efforts

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



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Geri Bonzon-Keenan  
Successor County Attorney

GBK/uw



**MEMORANDUM**  
(Revised)

**TO:** Honorable Chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz  
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Gen Bonzon-Keenan  
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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 present \_\_\_\_, 2/3 membership \_\_\_\_, 3/5's \_\_\_\_, unanimous \_\_\_\_, CDMP 7 vote requirement per 2-116.1(3)(h) or (4)(c) \_\_\_\_, CDMP 2/3 vote requirement per 2-116.1(3)(h) or (4)(c) \_\_\_\_, or CDMP 9 vote requirement per 2-116.1(4)(c)(2) \_\_\_\_ ) 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)(8)  
2-2-21

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

RESOLUTION URGING THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE TO ADOPT HOUSE MEMORIAL 71 OR SIMILAR LEGISLATION URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO RECOGNIZE THE EPIDEMIC OF SUICIDE AMONG VETERANS AND FULLY FUND SUICIDE PREVENTION EFFORTS BY THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS; AND URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO FULLY FUND THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS SUICIDE PREVENTION EFFORTS

**WHEREAS**, according to the United States Census Bureau, in 2019, approximately 17.4 million veterans lived in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, these courageous men and women served in the Korean War, World War II, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, every other operation that involved members of the United States Armed Forces, and during times of peace; and

**WHEREAS**, according to a 2016 report published by the Department of Veterans Affairs (“V.A.”), which considered records from every state in the nation and analyzed 55 million veterans’ records, during the period from 2001 through 2014, veterans demonstrated an increased risk of suicide when compared to their non-veteran peers; and

**WHEREAS**, research shows that veterans who die by suicide suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (“PTSD”), sleep disorders, traumatic brain injuries, chronic pain, and a host of other mental or physical disabilities, illnesses, or disorders at higher rates than the general population; and

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

**WHEREAS**, statistics compiled by the V.A. 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 seven to eight percent of the general population; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the V.A.'s 2020 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report ("Annual Report"), in 2018, there was an average of 17.6 veteran suicide deaths per day, which amounted to approximately 6,435 veterans who died by suicide that year; and

**WHEREAS**, in light of the significant number of veterans who die by suicide, the V.A. implemented a number of measures including, but not limited to, the Veterans Crisis Line, suicide prevention research, and evidence based clinical treatment approaches, all of which are intended to provide needed support and treatment to veterans and reduce the number of deaths caused by suicide; and

**WHEREAS**, in fact, the Annual Report provides reason to believe that such efforts are working and lives are being saved; and

**WHEREAS**, specifically, from 2017 – 2018, the suicide rate among veterans who received V.A. care declined by 2.4 percent, while the rates for veterans who did not receive such care increased by 2.5 percent; and

**WHEREAS**, on December 15, 2020, Representative Matt Willhite (D – Wellington) filed House Memorial ("HM") 71, which urges the United States Congress to recognize the epidemic of suicide among veterans and to fully fund suicide prevention efforts by the V.A.; and

**WHEREAS**, HM 71 is aimed at ensuring funding necessary to support health care and other treatment and services is available for the men and women who bravely risked their lives to protect the nation; and

**WHEREAS**, this Board urges the Legislature to adopt HM 71; and

**WHEREAS**, similarly, this Board urges the United States Congress to fully fund all of the V.A.'s suicide prevention efforts; and

**WHEREAS**, this Board recognizes the sacrifices veterans have made in service to our country and supports measures designed to prevent their deaths by suicide,

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

**Section 1.** Urges the Florida Legislature to adopt House Memorial 71 or similar legislation urging the United States Congress to recognize the epidemic of suicide among veterans and fully fund suicide prevention efforts by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

**Section 2.** Urges the United States Congress to fully fund the United States Department of Veterans Affairs suicide prevention efforts.

**Section 3.** Directs the Clerk of the Board to transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the Governor, Senate President, House Speaker, Representative Matt Willhite, the Chair and Members of the Miami-Dade County State Legislative Delegation, the Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, and the Secretary of United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

**Section 4.** Directs the County's state lobbyists to advocate for the legislative action set forth in section 1 above, and authorizes and directs the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs to amend the 2021 state legislative package to include this item.

**Section 5.** 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 amend the 2020 federal legislative package to include this item and to add this item to the 2021 federal legislative package when it is presented to the Board.

The Prime Sponsor of the foregoing resolution is Chairman Jose “Pepe” Diaz. It was offered by Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_, who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_ and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

- |                                       |                        |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Jose “Pepe” Diaz, Chairman            |                        |
| Oliver G. Gilbert, III, Vice-Chairman |                        |
| Sen. René García                      | Keon Hardemon          |
| Sally A. Heyman                       | Danielle Cohen Higgins |
| Eileen Higgins                        | Joe A. Martinez        |
| Kionne L. McGhee                      | Jean Monestime         |
| Raquel A. Regalado                    | Rebeca Sosa            |
| Sen. Javier D. Souto                  |                        |

The Chairperson thereupon declared this resolution duly passed and adopted this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of February, 2021. 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