

## Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Public Health and Human Services to hold hearings on post-traumatic stress disorder and improving access to mental health services for the City's veteran population.

WHEREAS, Throughout history, people have recognized that exposure to combat can negatively impact the mental health of those involved in these situations; and

WHEREAS, The diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) historically originates from observations of the effect of combat on soldiers, and has been described in the past as "combat fatigue," "shell shock," or "war neurosis"; and

WHEREAS, PTSD impacts 11-20 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan War veterans, approximately 12 percent of Gulf War veterans, and 15 percent of Vietnam veterans; and

WHEREAS, In addition to combat-related PTSD, roughly 1 in 4 women and 1 in 100 men utilizing the Veterans Administration report instances of sexual assault, which can also result in prolonged traumatic stress; and

WHEREAS, Risk factors for PTSD among people in the military include lower education status, previous traumas, drug and alcohol use, poor social support, a history of mental illness and, for some, genetics may make them more predisposed to developing PTSD than others; and

WHEREAS, People with PTSD often have co-occurring conditions such as depression, which also puts sufferers at risk of suicide. A report by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs suggests about 20 veterans died by suicide each day in 2014; and

WHEREAS, Other factors that can increase the risk of suicide in the military PTSD population include substance use, other mental health conditions, and relationship problems; and

WHEREAS, Both active duty service members and veterans face barriers to treatment for mental health issues such as; personal embarrassment about service-related mental disabilities, fear of being seen as weak, long wait times to receive mental health treatment, a lack of understanding or awareness about mental health problems and treatment options, and logistical problems such as long travel distances in order to receive care; and

WHEREAS, More than one in five veterans receiving federal disability payouts suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, a figure that has spiked in the last decade, and the number of disability cases related to PTSD has nearly tripled, from around 345,000 cases in fiscal 2008 to more than 940,000 cases today; and

WHEREAS, Veteran mental health services are essential in order to help our returning vets recover from their combat experiences and mental health issues related to their military service; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Committee on Public Health**

and Human Services is authorized to hold hearings on post-traumatic stress disorder and improving access to mental health services for the City's veteran population.