



Legislation Text

File #: 2012-0377, **Version:** 1

A MOTION in support of the federal Mental Health ACCESS Act of 2012.

WHEREAS, suicide rates among our veterans and active servicemembers has increased to the current rate of one suicide per eighty minutes, and

WHEREAS, in 2012, the rate of suicides among veterans and active servicemembers has outpaced combat related deaths, and

WHEREAS, while many of our service men and women return from war without visible wounds, many of them struggle with unseen wounds from war including posttraumatic stress disorder ("PTSD") and traumatic brain injury ("TBI"), and

WHEREAS, families and friends of veterans and active servicemembers can experience emotional hardship while trying to cope with the stresses of deployments, as well as adjusting to their loved ones returning from service with PTSD and/or TBI, and

WHEREAS, many of the unseen wounds from war have led to our veterans and active duty servicemembers to commit suicide, and

WHEREAS, the first veterans and human services levy was passed by the voters of King County in November 2005 generating much needed funding to help veterans, military personnel and their families through a variety of housing and supportive services, and

WHEREAS, in August 2011, the voters of King County voted overwhelmingly to renew the veterans and human services levy for another six years, and

WHEREAS, the Mental Health Access to Continued Care and Enhancement of Support Services Act of 2012, which is also known as the Mental Health ACCESS Act of 2012, is federal legislation introduced by

Washington State Senator Patty Murray, and

WHEREAS, the Mental Health ACCESS Act of 2012 will provide additional help to our servicemembers and veterans so they may receive proper diagnoses and increased access to mental health care and support to address the unseen wounds from war, and

WHEREAS, the Mental Health ACCESS Act will expand eligibility for a variety of Department of Veterans Affairs mental health services to the family members of veterans, and

WHEREAS, the Mental Health ACCESS Act will establish accurate and reliable measures for mental health services and to implement a credible staffing model at the Department of Veterans Affairs, and

WHEREAS, the Mental Health ACCESS Act requires enhanced oversight and standardization for the Department of Defense suicide prevention and resilience programs, and

WHEREAS, the veterans and their loved ones of King County will benefit from the Mental Health ACCESS Act of 2012 through greater access to improved mental health services and counseling opportunities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

The council approves of and supports Congressional passage of the Mental Health ACCESS Act of 2012 as it will support the nearly 131,000 veterans of our county, and their loved ones, through increased access to improved mental health and social service programs, which will help prevent suicide among our veterans and active duty servicemembers.