

LOCAL VETERAN HOPES NEW BILL PREVENTS VETERAN SUICIDES

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JONESBORO, AR (KAIT) -

The Military Suicide Prevention Act, or Clay Hunt Act, passed in the Senate Tuesday and one local veteran hopes the bill prevents more veteran suicides.

The bill aims to prevent suicide amongst veterans by making more information readily available and requiring evaluations on suicide prevention programs. There are 22 military suicides committed a day on average, adding up to about 8,000 a year.



The Beck Pride Center in Jonesboro is a service that helps local veterans get used to everyday life. Former Army Staff Sergeant Tim McQuay is one of the veterans that is a part of the Beck Pride Center. McQuay spent 19 years in the Army and was deployed three times to Iraq. He returned to the states in 2010 and suffered from depression for the next three years.

Director of the Beck Pride Center Lynda Nash said most veterans that walk through their door suffer from some form of depression. She said both Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury are closely linked to depression in veterans.

Nash and McQuay are hopeful that the new bill will provide veterans with the help that they need to prevent them from committing suicide.

McQuay said one of his personal goals is to help stop the 22 daily suicides.

“There’s 22 average suicides a day by veterans. That has got to stop,” McQuay said. “That’s my passion. I want to work in the VA and do what I can to reach out to these fellow veterans and prevent them from taking their own lives.”

Nash said the center offers veterans a place to talk to others in their situation.

She said they realize that there are other people out there going through similar problems. The big problem for veterans arises a few years after they return, Nash said.

“A lot of these veterans, functioned pretty well or do alright when they first come back,” Nash said. “They may get out of the service at that point and two years down the road, they are really struggling.”

McQuay said he realized his goal in life after a Vietnam veteran opened up to him one day. The man told him that he had not told anyone that information in about 40 years. McQuay he knew then what he was meant to do.

“It was like a light that went off in my head,” McQuay said. “It was like yeah this is what I was called to do. You know, I mean I helped soldiers for 19 years and I can’t just turn that off once I put up the uniform.”