



# CERTIFICATE of RECOGNITION

*By virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution of Virginia in the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, there is hereby officially recognized:*

## **PREVENTS 2020**

**WHEREAS**, suicide is a national public health challenge that both results from and causes immeasurable pain among individuals, families, and communities across the country; and

**WHEREAS**, nationwide the number of military and Veteran suicides exceeded 6,000 each year between 2008-2017; and

**WHEREAS**, 3,250 Military Service Members and Veterans died by suicide in Virginia between 2003-2017; and

**WHEREAS**, suicide is the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the United States, 2<sup>nd</sup> for people ages 10-35, and on average 132 Americans die by suicide each day accounting for 48,344 suicide deaths in 2018; and

**WHEREAS**, 1,211 Virginians died by suicide in 2018 making suicide the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the Commonwealth; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 5, 2019, the President signed Executive Order 13861—establishing the President’s Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide (PREVENTS); and

**WHEREAS**, PREVENTS calls for the development of a comprehensive plan to empower Veterans and end suicide through coordinated suicide prevention efforts, prioritized research activities, and strengthened collaboration across the public and private sectors; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Richmond was one of the first eight cities to join the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in the Mayor’s Challenge to Prevent Suicide among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF); and

**WHEREAS**, Virginia was one of the first seven States to join the VA and SAMHSA in a Governor’s Challenge to Prevent Suicide among SMVF; and

**WHEREAS**, Virginia developed an interagency team, led by the Virginia Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs and the Virginia Secretary of Health and Human Resources, to address Veteran suicide at the state level; and

**WHEREAS**, the Virginia Governor’s Challenge to Prevent Suicide team focuses on a public health approach to provide outreach and support to military and veteran families where they live, work, and thrive in local communities; and

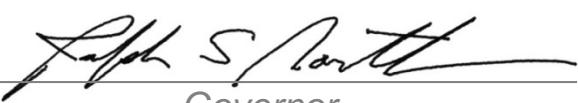
**WHEREAS**, for every individual who feels their challenges are insurmountable, alone, ashamed, or believes that they would be a burden if their thoughts or feelings were shared, there are scores of others in every Virginia community who want to help but are not sure how; and

**WHEREAS**, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, businesses, Virginia Values Veterans (V3) program partners, health care providers, first responders, the criminal justice community, institutions of higher learning, the faith-based community, the Arts community, the research sector, and many more public and private organizations are in a unique position to leverage the learnings from our fellow Virginians, and especially, our Veterans, to encourage a national discussion on mental health and wellbeing, and to collaborate on meaningful solutions; and

**WHEREAS**, the PREVENTS national public health campaign REACH, will seek to increase mental health awareness to reduce suicide for all Americans;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Ralph S. Northam, do hereby recognize September 2020 as **PREVENTS 2020** in our **COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**, and I call this observance to the attention of all our citizens.



  
Governor

  
Secretary of the Commonwealth