

**VA****U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs**

# News Release

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Nov. 20, 2019**Wilkie Praises HVAC Leaders' End-of-Year Suicide Prevention Goal**

VA Secretary Robert Wilkie praised members of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs today for setting the goal of getting important Veterans suicide prevention legislation passed before the end of the year.

Wilkie appeared before HVAC today to testify in support of [H.R. 3495](#), the Improve Well-Being for Veterans Act. The bipartisan bill, which currently has 228 cosponsors, would allow VA to offer direct grants to Veterans service organizations, caregivers and nonprofits at the state and local level, letting these groups use grants to tailor aid to the Veterans in their communities for the purposes of suicide prevention.

While HVAC leaders are still finalizing the precise legislative vehicle and language through which to accomplish the goals of H.R. 3495, HVAC Chairman Mark Takano during the hearing expressed support for getting final legislation passed in 2019.

"I do want to get this legislation passed before the end of the year," [Takano said](#).

After the hearing, Secretary Wilkie released the following statement:

"To reach the roughly 60 percent of veterans who die by suicide each day without any recent connection to VA care, the government needs to reach far beyond its walls and work with as many partners as it can. I am fighting for legislation that would give VA the ability to do just that, and I am encouraged Chairman Takano shares my goal of getting the legislation passed before the end of the year."

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