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By:  Jetton H.R. No. 465

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, Americans owe a profound debt of gratitude to the brave men and women who have served in our nation's military, and the mental health of those veterans should be a paramount concern to every Texan; and

WHEREAS, There are 18 million military veterans across the nation, and approximately 1.7 million of them have been found to have a mental health condition, including depression, anxiety, and substance abuse disorders, as well as such serious mental illnesses as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder; more than 1.4 million veterans live in the Lone Star State, with certain counties possessing some of the highest concentrations of veterans in the nation; in our state alone, the number of veterans who died by suicide increased from 496 in 2017 to 511 in 2018; and

WHEREAS, Structural barriers inhibit veterans' access to critical mental health services, and these are further complicated by such factors as their military identity, the stigma surrounding mental illness, and the culture gap between military and civilian life; the result is that veterans are significantly less likely to receive mental health care than the civilian population, with more than 50 percent of returning veterans failing to receive any mental health care at all; and

WHEREAS, Raising awareness of the need to provide veterans with better access to mental health care is a necessary first step in addressing this pressing issue; as they work to heal the scars of war and negotiate the difficult transition to civilian life, our veterans deserve the support of their fellow citizens so that they may pursue rich and purposeful lives; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 87th Texas Legislature hereby recognize May 19, 2021, as Veteran Mental Health Awareness Day in the state of Texas.