

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12) spoke on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives on Thursday to thank the U.S. House Committee on Appropriations for including, at his request, \$20 million for suicide prevention in the Fiscal Year 2013 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Bill.

The new funds are a continuation of funding that [Holt worked to secure for the current fiscal year](#)

The bill including Holt's funding passed the House late on Thursday evening. It must pass the Senate and be signed by the President to become law.

The text of Holt's remarks follows below. Video is [available online](#).

"Madam Chair, our Nation just marked another Memorial Day at war and another year in which the epidemic of suicides of our country's servicemembers and veterans continues. In April of this year, The New York Times' columnist Nick Kristof noted that for every American lost on the battlefield, about 25 servicemembers and veterans are dying by their own hands. These are silent casualties of war. And if we're to stop the epidemic, we must recognize it.

"I want to thank the ranking member, Representative Bishop of Georgia, and the subcommittee chair, Representative Culberson, for their recognition that continued funding for suicide prevention and outreach programs for our veterans must be a national priority. I'm pleased that the committee looked favorably on my request and included an additional \$20 million for suicide prevention outreach programs, including social media, in this bill. This is the second year in a row that the House has taken this step because the administration and the VA have yet to create a dedicated programmatic funding stream for suicide prevention and outreach.

"Let me take this opportunity to urge the administration and our President to direct the Office of Management and Budget to create such a dedicated funding stream for such programs. Our suicide prevention response must be coordinated and must be funded properly over the lifetime of our veterans, because this is not a problem that will go away once the guns fall silent.

"I thank my colleagues on the committee for all they have done to craft a bill that will help provide the services that our veterans need and deserve.

"I yield back the balance of my time."

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