

FUNDS WILL SUPPORT PURPOSES OF THE “SERGEANT COLEMAN S. BEAN SUICIDE PREVENTION ACT,” NAMED IN HONOR OF NJ VETERAN

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12) today announced that he has secured \$40 million in the final 2012 federal budget to support military suicide prevention efforts. The House and the Senate approved Holt’s funding late last week, and it will now be signed into law by the president.

“The epidemic of suicides among our veterans is measureable in very grim numbers,” Holt said. “Before this day is out, 18 more veterans will have taken their own lives. That is the daily average, it is intolerable, and it has to stop.”

He added, “These funds will help to convey a critical message to America’s soldiers and veterans: You are not alone. If you have suffered such trauma in service to this country that you are considering suicide, America stands ready to help you.”

The funding will support the activities that Holt originally proposed in the Sergeant Coleman S. Bean Individual Ready Reserve Suicide Prevention Act, which was named in honor of an East Brunswick soldier who died by suicide after serving in Iraq.

“We have had some disappointments over the last couple of years, and this marks a real success,” said Linda Bean, the mother of Sergeant Bean. “We have come to realize that, although soldiers come home to communities that honor and respect them, their communities may be ill-equipped to deal with their injuries – visible or invisible. We are really hopeful that some portion of this money will be used to publicize in a meaningful and effective way what help is available to soldiers and veterans and how that assistance can be accessed.”

Of the funds, \$20 million will support suicide prevention efforts for active-duty soldiers and reservists at the Department of Defense, while the other \$20 million will support veterans’ suicide prevention at the Department of Veterans Affairs. Activities funded may include outreach to vulnerable soldiers and veterans through TV, radio, and social media, as well as direct suicide intervention efforts.

Holt Secures \$40 Million to Support Military Suicide Prevention

Tuesday, 20 December 2011 10:08

Holt originally secured the funding through two separate amendments: the bipartisan Holt-Runyan Amendment, coauthored with Rep. Jon Runyan (R-NJ), to the 2011 Veterans Affairs appropriations bill; and the Holt Amendment to the 2011 Defense appropriations bill. The two bills were later combined by the Senate.

Veterans who are struggling with the emotional, physical, family or career consequences of their service can call 1-855-VET-TALK (1-855-838-8255), 24 hours a day. The call is free, and all counselors are veterans.