

Building Resources and Access for Veterans Mental Health Engagement (BRAVE) Act

(S. 609)



EMPOWER WOMEN VETERANS

Tailored Mental Health Care Saves Lives

Women veterans experience higher rates of military sexual trauma (MST), intimate partner violence, and related mental health conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression than male veterans. Long wait times and limited services can make it even harder to get care. Research shows that women veterans who experience MST and feel dismissed during service are less likely to seek care through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

★ THE ISSUE:

Elevated Mental Health Risks for Women Veterans

- ✓ Women veterans are more likely than male veterans to experience PTSD, depression, and suicidal ideation, requiring targeted attention.
- ✓ The suicide rate for women veterans has more than doubled since 2001, underscoring the urgent need for women-centric prevention strategies.

CHALLENGES WITH ACCESSING TAILORED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES:



One-size-fits-all suicide prevention tools often overlook risks unique to women veterans, like MST or intimate partner violence, leaving gaps in outreach and intervention.



VA's REACH VET program hasn't fully accounted for experiences of women veterans in predicting suicide risk. Reintegration retreats and family programs rarely offer enough women-focused options or accessibility for medical needs.

★ THE SOLUTION:

Pass the Building Resources and Access for Veterans Mental Health Engagement (BRAVE) Act (S. 609)

Original Sponsor:
Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT)

The BRAVE Act includes a title dedicated specifically to strengthening care and services for women veterans. By requiring VA to tailor suicide prevention and mental health outreach to women's unique experiences, Title III ensures programs better reflect and respond to the needs of this growing population.

Title III includes:

- Studying the effectiveness of current suicide prevention and mental health outreach programs for women veterans.
- Updating VA's REACH VET program to include risk factors especially relevant to women veterans, like MST and intimate partner violence.
- Ensuring veteran retreats are accessible and tailored to women's needs, including women-only groups.

★ **Women warriors deserve personalized mental health care that empowers them to rise stronger, not just survive.** Wounded Warrior Project® calls on Congress to advance the BRAVE Act (S. 609) to ensure VA shapes suicide prevention and mental health outreach to women's unique experiences, so programs truly meet the needs of the growing population of women who served.