

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To expand congressional oversight of the operation of the Veterans Crisis Line of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to improve workforce protections for all Veterans Crisis Line personnel, and to ensure robust performance standards that fulfill the Veterans Crisis Line mission and meet caller demand, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Ms. DUCKWORTH introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To expand congressional oversight of the operation of the Veterans Crisis Line of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to improve workforce protections for all Veterans Crisis Line personnel, and to ensure robust performance standards that fulfill the Veterans Crisis Line mission and meet caller demand, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Protecting Veterans
5 in Crisis Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. OVERSIGHT OF VETERANS CRISIS LINE.**

2 (a) NOTIFICATION OF PENDING TERMINATION OF
3 VETERANS CRISIS LINE EMPLOYEES.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 48 hours be-
5 fore terminating the employment of any employee of
6 the Veterans Crisis Line, the Secretary of Veterans
7 Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans'
8 Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Vet-
9 erans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a no-
10 tification that provides—

11 (A) a justification of cause for such termi-
12 nation;

13 (B) a clarification on whether the employee
14 is a veteran or military spouse; and

15 (C) a detailed plan to ensure continuity of
16 the mission readiness of the Veterans Crisis
17 Line in the event of such termination.

18 (2) SUNSET.—This subsection shall terminate
19 on January 20, 2029.

20 (b) REPORT ON VETERANS CRISIS LINE PER-
21 SONNEL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the
22 enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the
23 Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Ap-
24 propriations of the Senate and the Committee on Vet-
25 erans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the

1 House of Representatives a report that includes the fol-
2 lowing:

3 (1) The number of employees working for the
4 Veterans Crisis Line on January 20, 2025, which
5 shall include a breakdown by job category, proba-
6 tionary status, whether the employee is a veteran,
7 whether the employee is a military spouse, status of
8 employment on the date of submission of the report,
9 and date of reinstatement.

10 (2) The number of employees terminated from
11 the Veterans Crisis Line on or around February 13,
12 2025, which shall include a breakdown by job cat-
13 egory, probationary status, whether the employee is
14 a veteran, whether the employee is a military spouse,
15 status of employment on the date of submission of
16 the report, and date of reinstatement.

17 (3) The number of employees terminated from
18 the Veterans Crisis Line on or around February 24,
19 2025, which shall include a breakdown by job cat-
20 egory, probationary status, whether the employee is
21 a veteran, whether the employee is a military spouse,
22 status of employment on the date of submission of
23 the report, and date of reinstatement.

24 (4) The number of employees working for the
25 Veterans Crisis Line on the date of submission of

1 the report, which shall include a breakdown by job
2 category, probationary status, whether the employee
3 is a veteran, and whether the employee is a military
4 spouse.

5 (c) REPORT ON VETERANS CRISIS LINE OPERATIONS
6 AND PERFORMANCE.—Not later than 30 days after the
7 date of the enactment of this Act, and every 30 days there-
8 after until January 20, 2029, the Secretary shall submit
9 to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and
10 the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Rep-
11 resentatives a report that includes the following:

12 (1) An assessment of the performance of the
13 Veterans Crisis Line, as compared to the previous
14 month and the same month of the previous calendar
15 year.

16 (2) Average wait times for a caller to connect
17 with an operator and the volume of unanswered
18 calls.

19 (3) Ratios of callers to phone operators, both
20 in-person and remote, trainers, and all other posi-
21 tions affiliated with the Veterans Crisis Line.

22 (4) A report on resources used and outstanding.

23 (5) A staffing report broken down by job cat-
24 egory.

1 (d) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT ON IMPROVE-
2 MENTS TO VETERANS CRISIS LINE.—Not later than 180
3 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
4 Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to
5 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committee
6 on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate
7 and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Com-
8 mittee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Rep-
9 resentatives a report on the operation and performance of
10 the Veterans Crisis Line, including recommendations for
11 improvement.

12 (e) VETERANS CRISIS LINE DEFINED.—In this sec-
13 tion, the term “Veterans Crisis Line” means the toll-free
14 hotline for veterans established under section 1720F(h) of
15 title 38, United States Code.