

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5872

To amend title 10, United States Code, to establish a separation oath for members of the Armed Forces who are separating from military service.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 12, 2020

Mr. MAST (for himself, Mr. BARR, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Mr. POSEY, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. CRAWFORD, and Mr. MARSHALL) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To amend title 10, United States Code, to establish a separation oath for members of the Armed Forces who are separating from military service.

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 “Oath of Exit Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF SEPARATION OATH FOR MEM-**
6 **BERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-
8 ings:

1 (1) The United States Armed Forces is the
2 largest, all-volunteer military force in the world, yet
3 less than one percent of the American population
4 serves in the Armed Forces.

5 (2) Each branch of the Armed Forces (Army,
6 Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard) in-
7 stills in its members a sense of duty and obligation
8 to the United States, their branch of service, and
9 their comrades-in-arms.

10 (3) The Department of Veterans Affairs esti-
11 mates that approximately 20 veterans of the Armed
12 Forces commit suicide each day and a veteran's risk
13 of suicide is 21 percent higher compared to an adult
14 who has not served in the Armed Forces.

15 (4) The Department of Veterans Affairs is ag-
16 gressively undertaking measures to prevent these
17 tragic outcomes, yet suicide rates among veterans
18 remain unacceptably high.

19 (5) Upon enlistment or appointment in the
20 Armed Forces, a new member is obligated to take an
21 oath of office or oath of enlistment.

22 (6) Most members of the Armed Forces view
23 this oath not as an imposition, but as a promise that
24 they are bound to fulfill.

1 (b) ESTABLISHMENT OF SEPARATION OATH.—Sec-
2 tion 502 of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

3 (1) by redesignating subsection (b) as sub-
4 section (c) and, in such subsection, by striking “The
5 oath” and inserting “An oath established by this
6 section”; and

7 (2) by inserting after subsection (a) the fol-
8 lowing new subsection (b):

9 “(b) SEPARATION OATH.—Prior to retirement or
10 other separation from the armed forces, other than sepa-
11 ration pursuant to the sentence of a court-martial, a mem-
12 ber of an armed force may take the following oath:

13 “‘I, _____, recognizing that my
14 oath to support and defend the Constitution of the
15 United States against all enemies, foreign and do-
16 mestic, has involved me and my fellow members in
17 experiences that few persons, other than our peers,
18 can understand, do solemnly swear (or affirm) to
19 continue to be the keeper of my brothers- and sis-
20 ters-in-arms and protector of the United States and
21 the Constitution; to preserve the values I have
22 learned; to maintain my body and my mind; to give
23 help to, and seek help from, my fellow veterans; and
24 to not bring harm to myself or others. I take this

1 oath freely and without purpose of evasion, so help
2 me God.’”.

3 (c) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—

4 (1) SECTION HEADING.—The heading of section
5 502 of title 10, United States Code, is amended to
6 read as follows:

7 **“§ 502. Enlistment oath and separation oath: who**
8 **may administer”.**

9 (2) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections
10 at the beginning of chapter 31 of title 10, United
11 States Code, is amended by striking the item relat-
12 ing to section 502 and inserting the following new
13 item:

“502. Enlistment oath and separation oath: who may administer.”.

