THE AMERICAN LEGION
Veterans Strengthening America
OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL COMMANDER
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July 15, 2021

Representative Sheila Jackson Lee
2426 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Jackson Lee:

On behalf of the nearly two million members of The American Legion, I am pleased to express support for H.R. 3405 entitled "*to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to designate a week as "Battle Buddy Check Week" for the purpose of outreach and education concerning peer wellness checks for veterans, and for other purposes.*"

Our most sacred responsibility as a nation is to care for our fellow men and women who have served this nation with honor. Only with servant leadership and direct contact with our fellow veterans can we uncover the true needs of our warriors and avert potential crisis. The American Legion has long had a "Buddy Check Week," asking our Legionnaires to conduct veteran outreach as part of their daily routine. The American Legion's "Buddy Check" program has been a great tool for our membership, and we strongly support legislation that expands this program to VA.

This legislation requires VA to establish a "Battle Buddy Check Week," provide educational opportunities, materials, and references for veterans to learn how to conduct personal wellness checks, as well as require increased resources for the Veterans Crisis Line to handle any potential increased usage during the designated week.

Through American Legion Resolution No. 18: *Buddy Check Week* and American Legion Resolution No. 27: *Veterans Crisis Line*, we strongly support this legislation, as it directs VA to establish a "Battle Buddy Check Week" and it expands resources for the Veterans Crisis Line. The American Legion sincerely appreciates your leadership on this legislation.

For God & Country,

James W. "Bill" Oxford

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National Commander