The American Legion

OFFICE OF THE
NATIONAL COMMANDER

★ WASHINGTON OFFICE ★ 1608 "K" STREET, N.W. ★ WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006 ★
(202) 263-2986 ★

April 8, 2016

Honorable Lee Zeldin
United States House of Representatives
1517 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Zeldin:

On behalf of the more than 2 million members of The American Legion I express full support for the draft legislation entitled, ***P.F.C. Joseph Dwyer Peer-to-Peer Mental Health Program***. This draft bill, as written, would authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make grants available to state and local entities for the purpose of carrying out peer-to-peer mental health programs.

Through Resolution No. 284, *VA to Develop Outreach and Peer-to-Peer Programs for Rehabilitation* , urges the President of the United States and the U.S. Congress to call on the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to develop a national program to provide peer-to-peer rehabilitation services based on the recovery model tailored to meet specialized needs of current generation combat-affected veterans and their families.

Additionally, this resolution calls on the VA Secretary to direct the VA to develop effective service partnerships with community mental health and addictions agencies to expand access to mental health services for National Guard members and reservists living in rural America.

Finally, the resolution states that there should be maximum effort to ensure that the VA Secretary utilizes returning servicemembers for positions as peer support specialists in the effort to provide treatment, support services and readjustment counseling for those veterans requiring these services.

Congressman Zeldin, The American Legion applauds your leadership in addressing issues that are important to America's veterans and their families.

Sincerely,

DALE BARNETT
National Commander