



ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

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General Gordon R. Sullivan
United States Army (Ret.)
President

18 September 2012

On behalf of the members of the Association of the United States Army, I write to urge you to amend the Senate version of the Fiscal Year 2013 National Defense Authorization Bill (NDAA) to include the language in Section 1071 of the House version of the NDAA. The language in Section 1071 would authorize military mental health providers and commanders to inquire if a military member plans to acquire or already owns a privately-owned firearm if the health care provider or commander has reasonable grounds to believe the member is at high risk for suicide or causing harm to others.

The membership of AUSA is gravely concerned with the alarming rate of suicide among those who serve in the nation's military services. Two-thirds of military suicides involve firearms, a majority of which are personal firearms. Including the language of Section 1071 would give commanders unambiguous authority to urge service members at risk who have private firearms to use gunlocks or store the weapon away from home temporarily.

Military suicide is a complex problem that demands a range of actions to address it. Inclusion of the language in Section 1071 in the FY 1013 NDAA would give commanders one additional tool to fight against military suicide and help them save the lives of the troops who have so diligently served our nation.

AUSA will be honored to work with you in achieving the goal of reducing suicide among American military personnel.

Sincerely,

GORDON R. SULLIVAN

General, USA Retired