



## **Buddy Check Week Legislation – S.4657 & H.R.2898**

**The Issue:** *With military suicides rising by 20% since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, The American Legion joins bipartisan effort to pass Buddy Check Week Legislation*

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, veterans have become increasingly isolated, and the Buddy Check program has offered veterans in need assistance in these unprecedented times. Whether it is a need for help getting groceries and medication, or just someone to talk to, Legionnaires have been there for others in need.

Last year, The American Legion formally launched a "[Buddy Check Week](#)" program which encourages Legionnaires to conduct veteran outreach as part of their daily routine. The idea is to reconnect with veterans who may need assistance but don't know where to go or who to ask. TAL formally conducts these buddy checks two weeks a year, once during TAL's birthday in May and during the week of Veteran Day as dictated by American Legion Resolution No. 18: *Buddy Check*.

- S. 4657 & H.R. 2898 directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to designate one week each year as "Buddy Check Week". This bill would expand an American Legion program to the Department of Veterans of Affairs and dramatically increase the number of veterans we can positively effect. The hard work you do at the local level will be elevated to a national program to reach even more veterans! This bill is a timely, effective, and low-cost response to the rising isolation as a result of a global pandemic.
- The bill would require VA to designate a Buddy Check Week
- VA would be required to work with VSO's, including TAL, on producing educational materials and scripts to help conduct buddy checks
- VA would be required to hold online and in-person trainings on conducting buddy checks
- The bill would increase resources for the Veterans Crisis Line
- The bill is *bipartisan*, both Republicans and Democrats have introduced and support this legislation

ACTIONS Required by Legislative Council:

1. **Call your assigned representative and encourage them to support and **COSPONSOR** this legislation **TODAY!****
  - **Senate Bill S.4657**
  - **House Bill H.R.2898**
2. Share with our Action Alert with friends and colleagues! <https://tinyurl.com/TALaction>

For question regarding the legislation, Action Alert, or any grassroots issue please reach out to Patrick McDonough, Grassroots Coordinator, at [grassroots@legion.org](mailto:grassroots@legion.org).

**Veterans Crisis Line – 1-800-273-8255 press 1**