

111<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. RES. 1229

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the President should overturn the policy that prohibits sending a presidential letter of condolence to the family of a member of the Armed Forces who has died by suicide.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 25, 2010

Mr. BURTON of Indiana (for himself, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. HINCHEY, Ms. RICHARDSON, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. INGLIS, Mr. ROTHMAN of New Jersey, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. KILROY, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. TONKO, Mr. WOLF, Mr. PENCE, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. OLVER, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. RUSH, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. McCAUL, Mr. GRIFFITH, Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas, Mr. KAGEN, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Ms. BORDALLO, Mrs. SCHMIDT, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. PASTOR of Arizona, Mr. PIERLUISI, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. LANGEVIN, and Mr. GUTIERREZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services

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## RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the President should overturn the policy that prohibits sending a presidential letter of condolence to the family of a member of the Armed Forces who has died by suicide.

Whereas suicide is a growing problem in the Armed Forces that cannot be ignored;

Whereas a record number of military suicides was reported in 2008, with 128 active-duty Army and 48 Marine deaths reported;

Whereas the number of military suicides during 2009 is expected to equal or exceed the 2008 total;

Whereas long-standing policy prevents President Obama from sending a condolence letter to the family of a member of the Armed Forces who has died by suicide;

Whereas members of the Armed Forces sacrifice their physical, mental, and emotional well-being for the freedoms Americans hold dear;

Whereas the military family also bears the cost of defending the United States, with military spouses and children sacrificing much and standing ready to provide unending support to their spouse or parent who is a member of the Armed Forces;

Whereas the loss of a member of the Armed Forces to suicide directly and tragically affects military spouses and children, as well as the United States;

Whereas much more needs to be done to protect and address the mental health needs of members of the Armed Forces, just as they serve to protect and defend the freedoms of the United States;

Whereas a presidential letter of condolence is not only about the deceased because it also serves as a sign of respect for the grieving family and an acknowledgment of the family for their personal loss; and

Whereas a lack of acknowledgment and condolence from the President only leaves these families with an emotional vacuum and a feeling that somehow their sacrifices have been less than others: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-  
2 representatives that—

3           (1) the current policy that prohibits sending a  
4 presidential letter of condolence to the family of a  
5 member of the Armed Forces who has died by sui-  
6 cide only serves to perpetuate the stigma of mental  
7 illness that pervades the Armed Forces; and

8           (2) the President, as Commander-in-Chief,  
9 should overturn the policy and treat all military fam-  
10 ilies equally.

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