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# PRESS RELEASE

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## VVA Calls For Swift Passage of the *SERVICE Act*

(Washington, D.C) — “Vietnam Veterans of America applauds the introduction of the *SERVICE Act*,” said Jack McManus, VVA National President. “This legislation will save lives as it provides law enforcement with tools and training to help respond to veterans in crisis. We have seen the “suicide by cop” scenario played out all too often. With the appropriate training, police will have tools to both recognize and de-escalate such a situation and avoid unnecessary tragedy.”

The *Supporting Every At-Risk Veteran In Critical Emergencies (SERVICE) Act* (H.R. 3180), introduced to Congress by Representatives Dale W. Strong (R-AL), Lou Correa (D-CA), Maria Elvira Salazar (R-FL), and Glenn Ivey (D-MD), would establish a pilot program to allow local law-enforcement agencies to use the Department of Justice’s (DOJ) Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grants to establish dedicated “Veterans Response Teams” within departments to respond to emergency calls involving veterans in crisis.

Law enforcement officers who have a background in military service would be given preference in selections for Veterans Response Teams. Members of those teams would be available 24/7 to respond to instances of a veteran in crisis, including mental health or substance abuse situations. Following the initial response, members of the team would assist in connecting the individual with community and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) resources.

“The deployment of the proven strategy of veterans helping veterans, combined with a new focus on mental health or substance-abuse situations, will more effectively address veterans in crisis and those contemplating suicide,” McManus noted. “For these reasons, VVA calls for the swift passage of this legislation.”