

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 698

Expressing support for the designation of June 9, 2024, as “Veterans Get Outside Day”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 16, 2024

Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mr. KING, and Mr. CRAMER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Expressing support for the designation of June 9, 2024, as “Veterans Get Outside Day”.

Whereas, between 2000 and 2023, the Secretary of Defense found that more than 460,000 members of the Armed Forces were diagnosed with traumatic brain injuries;

Whereas studies have found that, after decades of combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, 20 percent of veterans suffer from post-traumatic stress and depression;

Whereas the Secretary of Veterans Affairs found that veterans suffer a disproportionately higher rate of suicide compared to non-veterans, and post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, depression, and anxiety are root causes of the suicide epidemic in the veteran community, with an estimated 17.5 suicides per day in 2021;

Whereas, despite a strong effort by Congress and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to reduce veterans suicides, there are still gaps in mental health care for veterans, and the United States needs to use every treatment available to support the veteran community;

Whereas studies have shown that exposure to nature and the outdoors has a positive therapeutic impact on mental health, including by resulting in lower risks of depression and improved focus and attention, and even a single day outside can improve an individual's overall mood and lessen feelings of isolation;

Whereas studies have found that individuals with increased access to green space have a lower suicide risk;

Whereas the Forest Service sponsors a National Get Outdoors Day on the second Saturday in June to promote the health benefits of outdoor recreational activities;

Whereas the National Park Service sponsors a National Get Outdoors Month in June to promote the health benefits of outdoor recreational activities;

Whereas the United States has recognized the need to connect veterans with nature by providing free admission to national parks and forests; and

Whereas a targeted outreach effort, such as Veterans Get Outside Day, to veterans living with post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, depression, and anxiety may lead to further participation in outside events and improved mental health outcomes: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) expresses support for the designation of

3 “Veterans Get Outside Day” on June 9, 2024; and

1 (2) encourages the Secretary of Veterans Af-
2 fairs, the Chief of the Forest Service, and the Direc-
3 tor of the National Park Service to coordinate and
4 cooperate in promoting “Veterans Get Outside Day”
5 with National Get Outdoors Day and Get Outdoors
6 Month of June 2024.

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