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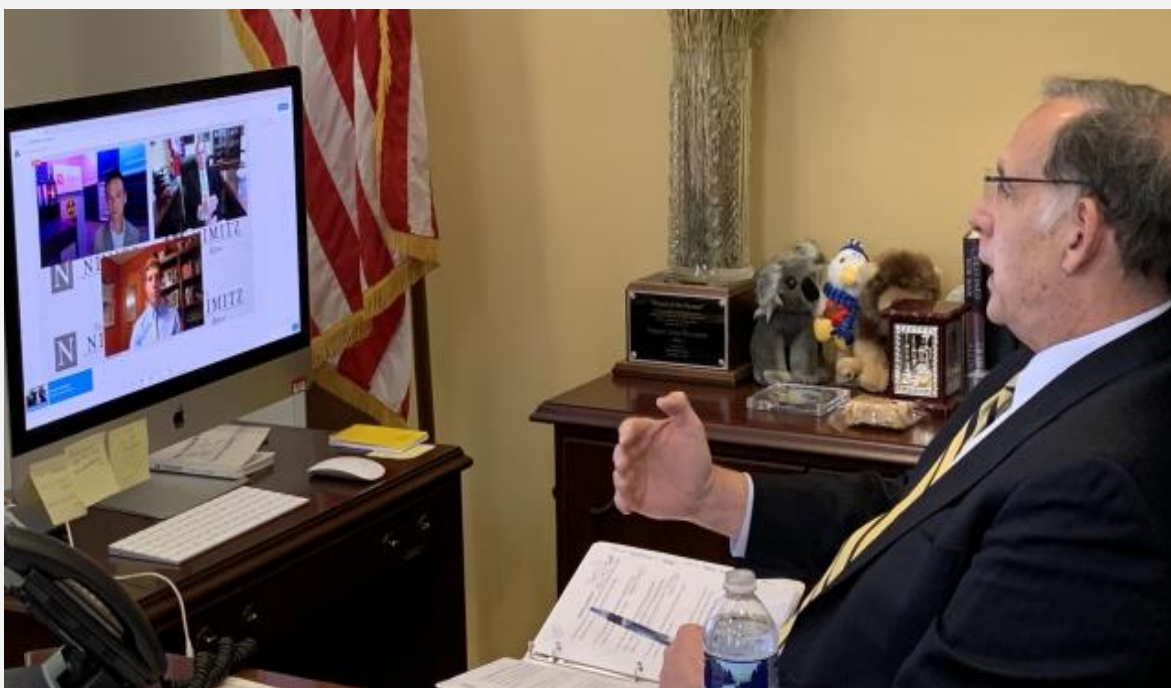
Arkansas


Contact

Boozman Bulletin: Supporting Veterans Mental Health and Implementing Policies to Prevent Veteran Suicides

On Monday, a [virtual veterans mental health event](#) brought together policymakers and leaders from organizations that provide outreach to veterans. Sgt. Maj. Lance Nutt, a retired Marine who founded the Rogers-based Sheep Dog Impact Assistance, participated in the event and I was honored to be part of the discussion as well to focus on how we can work together to help veterans living with mental illness and at-risk of suicide.

While Congress has improved access to new and existing treatments for veterans at risk of suicide and increased funding to support programs aimed at reducing rates, the number of veterans who commit suicide each day has unfortunately remained roughly unchanged. Participants in the virtual town hall agree that what we have been doing hasn't been working, so we need a new approach.





Participating in a virtual town hall to discuss solutions to reduce the veteran suicide epidemic.

That's why [I introduced legislation](#) that would allow the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to tap into the network of veteran-serving non-profits that provide suicide prevention services for veterans. Establishing a framework to coordinate these efforts and offering grants to expand outreach in the community would better measure the effectiveness of these programs. This [proposal was included](#) in the Senate VA Committee-passed comprehensive bill that expands veterans' access to mental health services.

A few days ago, President Trump unveiled a [national strategy](#) to reduce veteran suicides. The President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide (PREVENTS) is an approach to implementing solutions that will save lives. It's the result of conversations with lawmakers, veterans and veteran-serving organizations. This is a good step to implementing new and innovative approaches aimed at addressing this crisis. I was pleased to learn the plan includes providing grants for veteran-serving non-profits that have found success in their communities.

By empowering veteran-serving non-profits to work with the VA in the fight to end veteran suicide, we can make a difference. I will continue to support and develop policies that offer solutions to the veteran suicide crisis.

Quick Takes

- **Providing greater accountability and transparency among law enforcement officers:** The Senate Majority Leader attempted to bring to the floor the *Just and Unifying Solutions to Invigorate Communities Everywhere (JUSTICE) Act*. Unfortunately, Senate Democrats blocked the bill. This legislation focuses on [strengthening accountability, transparency and hiring practices of law enforcement](#) to better support the protection and care of all citizens and equal justice under the law. The vast majority of officers are good, honest individuals who provide a valuable service. We can help foster better relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve through proper reform. That is why I am a cosponsor of this legislation and believe that it deserves to be debated in the Senate.
- **Supporting Rural Broadband Expansion:** As a founder and co-chair of the Senate Broadband Caucus, I've been calling on federal agencies to expand access to broadband in rural Arkansas. As more Americans are taking precautions to avoid exposure to COVID-19, they are relying more on at-home broadband to connect to health providers and teachers, as well as for teleworking. [Collaboration among federal agencies is key](#) as it relates to information about high-speed internet access and efforts to bring the service to more Arkansans.
- **Protecting America's National Treasures:** Last week, the [Senate passed](#) the *Great American Outdoors Act*. This legislation ensures America's national treasures will continue thriving for future generations to enjoy. This landmark legislation allows us to [conserve and preserve public lands](#), and support the pastimes of Arkansas hunters, anglers and outdoor enthusiasts. State residents are proud of the resources in our

backyard that bond us to nature, attract visitors from around the world and support economic growth. Passage of this legislation ensures we will continue to enjoy these resources for years to come. I am hopeful my colleagues in the House of Representatives will also pass this bill.

- **Investing in Arkansas's Infrastructure:** The Arkansas Congressional Delegation recently announced the U.S. Department of Transportation awarded \$40 million to the Arkansas Department of Transportation for upgrades to [U.S. 67](#) northeast of Little Rock. This investment will support improvements so the road can meet interstate requirements.
- **Arkansas is Counting on Us:** The 2020 Census is underway. In addition to determining the distribution of billions of federal dollars, it impacts how lines are drawn for congressional districts and the number of U.S. Representatives serving each state. Our communities and our state are counting on us all to fill out the short survey to ensure Arkansas receives its rightful share of federal funds. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, [Arkansas is currently 40th in the country](#) for the number of homes that have responded to the 2020 Census. It is important that we all [do our part to be counted](#).
- **Connect on Social Media:** Stay up to date with what I'm doing for Arkansans via social media. You can find me on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).



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