

Senate Committee Passes Landmark IAVA-Backed Veteran Suicide Prevention Legislation

New York, NY (January 29, 2020) – Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) is celebrating today's unanimous passage of the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act (S. 785) by the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs (SVAC). The bipartisan, IAVA-backed legislation by SVAC Ranking Member Jon Tester (D-MT) and Chairman Jerry Moran (R-KS) aims to improve veterans' access to mental health care and combat the suicide crisis.

"IAVA first launched its campaign to combat veteran suicide six years ago, which culminated in passage of the Clay Hunt SAV Act," said IAVA CEO Jeremy Butler. "That was only the beginning and we have been proud to partner over the last year with Sens. Tester and Moran on this significant next step. We commend them for their bipartisan collaboration to move this bill forward. IAVA calls on the full Senate to expeditiously pass this critical bill."

The bill builds upon innovative suicide prevention initiatives, including IAVA's recommendation for investment in community-based organizations which provide suicide prevention services through grant programs. Further, it strengthens support for service members separating from the military, bolsters the VA's mental health workforce to serve more veterans, invests in innovative and alternative treatment options, and increases veterans access to telehealth services, among many other provisions.

Cmdr. Hannon served 23 years in the U.S. Navy as a SEAL. He retired to Montana where he received treatment for his invisible wounds of war while helping other veterans find their own paths to recovery. Sadly, he died by suicide in 2018. Learn about Cmdr. Hannon's life and service [HERE](#).