

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 9550

To establish a task force on the prevention of suicide by U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 14, 2022

Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas (for himself, Mrs. FLORES, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. GOLDEN, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, and Ms. SLOTKIN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security

A BILL

To establish a task force on the prevention of suicide by U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Taking Action to Pre-
5 vent Suicide Act” or the “TAPS Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. TASK FORCE ON THE PREVENTION OF SUICIDE BY**
2 **U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION**
3 **PERSONNEL.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Commissioner of U.S. Cus-
5 toms and Border Protection (CBP) and the Secretary of
6 Health and Human Services (HHS) shall jointly establish
7 a task force to examine matters relating to prevention of
8 suicide by U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel.

9 (b) COMPOSITION.—

10 (1) PERSONNEL.—The task force established in
11 accordance with subsection (a) shall consist of not
12 more than 14 members appointed by the Commis-
13 sioner of CBP from among individuals described in
14 paragraph (2).

15 (2) INDIVIDUALS DESCRIBED.—The individuals
16 described in this paragraph are the following:

17 (A) At least one CBP agent.

18 (B) The Deputy Commissioner of CBP.

19 (C) The Chief of the U.S. Border Patrol.

20 (D) The Executive Assistant Commissioner
21 of Air and Marine Operations of CBP.

22 (E) The Executive Assistant Commissioner
23 of Field Operations of CBP.

24 (F) At least one member of the National
25 Border Patrol Council.

1 (G) At least one member of the National
2 Treasury Employees Union.

3 (H) The Assistant Secretary for Mental
4 Health and Substance Abuse of the Department
5 of Health and Human Services.

6 (I) Persons who have experience in the fol-
7 lowing:

8 (i) National suicide prevention policy.

9 (ii) CBP personnel policy.

10 (iii) Research in the field of suicide
11 prevention.

12 (iv) Clinical care in mental health.

13 (J) At least one family member of a CBP
14 Customs Officer who has experience working
15 with families of CBP personnel.

16 (K) At least one family member of a U.S.
17 Border Patrol agent who has experience work-
18 ing with families of CBP personnel.

19 (3) LIMITATION.—To the greatest extent prac-
20 ticable, the Commissioner of CBP and the Secretary
21 of HHS shall make every effort to ensure there is
22 an equal representation of Federal and non-Federal
23 members of the task force.

24 (4) DEADLINE FOR APPOINTMENT.—All ap-
25 pointments of individuals to the task force shall be

1 made not later than 180 days after the date of the
2 enactment of this Act.

3 (5) CO-CHAIRS OF TASK FORCE.—There shall
4 be two co-chairs of the task force, as follows:

5 (A) One of the co-chairs shall be des-
6 ignated from among CBP personnel members.
7 Such designation shall be made by the Commis-
8 sioner of CBP at the time of appointment.

9 (B) One of the co-chairs shall be des-
10 ignated from among non-CBP personnel mem-
11 bers. Such designation shall be made by such
12 non-CBP personnel members.

13 (c) ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON SUI-
14 CIDE PREVENTION POLICY.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
16 after the date on which all personnel of the task
17 force have been appointed, the task force shall sub-
18 mit to the Commissioner of CBP a report containing
19 recommendations (including recommendations for
20 legislative or administrative action) regarding a com-
21 prehensive policy designed to prevent suicide by
22 CBP personnel.

23 (2) UTILIZATION OF OTHER EFFORTS.—In pre-
24 paring the report required under paragraph (1), the
25 task force shall take into consideration completed

1 and ongoing efforts by CBP to improve the efficacy
2 of suicide prevention programs.

3 (3) ELEMENTS.—The recommendations re-
4 ferred to in paragraph (1) shall include measures to
5 address the following:

6 (A) Methods to identify trends and com-
7 mon causal factors in suicides by CBP per-
8 sonnel.

9 (B) Methods to establish or update suicide
10 education and prevention programs conducted
11 by CBP based on identified trends and causal
12 factors.

13 (C) An assessment of current suicide edu-
14 cation and prevention programs of CBP.

15 (D) An assessment of current mental
16 health education programs and services avail-
17 able to CBP personnel, and the significance of
18 any stigma with respect to such programs and
19 services.

20 (E) An assessment of suicide incidence by
21 CBP personnel.

22 (F) The appropriate type and method of
23 investigation to determine the causes and fac-
24 tors surrounding each suicide by CBP per-
25 sonnel.

1 (G) The qualifications of individuals ap-
2 pointed to conduct an investigations of suicides
3 by CBP personnel.

4 (H) The information required by an inves-
5 tigation to determine the causes and factors re-
6 garding suicides by CBP personnel.

7 (I) The appropriate reporting requirements
8 after the conclusions of investigations conducted
9 on suicides by CBP personnel.

10 (J) The appropriate official or executive
11 agent within the Department of Homeland Se-
12 curity to receive and analyze reports on inves-
13 tinations of suicides by CBP personnel.

14 (K) The appropriate use of the information
15 gathered during investigations of suicides by
16 CBP personnel.

17 (L) Methods for protecting confidentiality
18 of information contained in reports of investiga-
19 tions of suicides by CBP personnel.

20 (d) ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS.—

21 (1) COMPENSATION.—Each member of the task
22 force who is a Federal employee shall serve without
23 compensation. Non-Federal members of the task
24 force shall be treated for purposes of section 3161

1 of title 5, United States Code, as having been ap-
2 pointed under subsection (b) of such section.

3 (2) OVERSIGHT.—The Commissioner of CBP
4 and the Secretary of HHS shall oversee the activi-
5 ties of the task force.

6 (3) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.—The Commis-
7 sioner of CBP and the Secretary of HHS shall pro-
8 vide the task force with such personnel, facilities,
9 and other administrative support as may be nec-
10 essary for the performance of the duties of the task
11 force.

12 (e) REPORT.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
14 after the appointment of all individuals to the task
15 force, the task force shall submit to the Secretary of
16 Homeland Security a report on its activities under
17 this section. The report shall include the following:

18 (A) A description of the activities of the
19 task force.

20 (B) The assessment and recommendations
21 required under subsection (c).

22 (C) Such other matters relating to the ac-
23 tivities of the task force that the task force con-
24 siders appropriate.

1 (2) TRANSMITTAL TO CONGRESS.—Not later
2 than 90 days after receipt of the report under para-
3 graph (1), the Secretary of Homeland Security shall
4 transmit the report to the Committee on Homeland
5 Security of the House of Representatives and the
6 Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental
7 Affairs of the Senate. The Secretary may include in
8 the transmittal such comments regarding the report
9 as the Secretary considers appropriate.

10 (f) PLAN REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after
11 receipt of the report under subsection (e)(1), the Secretary
12 of Homeland Security shall develop a plan based on the
13 assessments and recommendations of the task force and
14 submit such plan to the Committee on Homeland Security
15 of the House of Representatives and the Committee on
16 Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Sen-
17 ate.

18 (g) TERMINATION.—The task force shall terminate
19 90 days after the date on which the report of the task
20 force is submitted to the Committee on Homeland Secu-
21 rity of the House of Representatives and the Committee
22 on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the
23 Senate pursuant to subsection (e)(2).

1 (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
2 authorized to be appropriated \$10,000,000 to carry out
3 this section.

○