

Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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State Senate Passes Senator Helming Bills Addressing Crisis of Suicide

The New York State Senate passed two bills this week sponsored by Senator Pam Helming to address the crisis of suicide among veterans and rural residents.

Senator Helming is the co-prime sponsor of [Senate bill S.2036B](#) that would improve the reporting of veteran deaths by suicide. It requires the New York State Division of Veterans' Services to develop a brief form that coroners, coroner's physicians and medical examiners will use to report deaths of veterans who they believe have died by suicide. This bill was subsequently passed in the Assembly and will be sent to the Governor.

"Each day, 22 veterans and service members die by suicide. Suicide is a national public health issue that affects everyone, but disproportionately affects veterans, who are 1.5 times more likely to die by suicide than non-veterans," said Senator Helming. "With lifesaving resources like the Veterans Crisis Line at the Canandaigua VA, and bills like this that will provide informed data, we can hopefully help more veterans in crisis."

Senator Helming is the prime sponsor of [Senate bill S.5453](#) that would create the Rural Suicide Prevention Council to examine the causes of suicide and suicidal attempts among rural residents. The 12-member council will issue recommendations on policy and best practices to support rural New Yorkers in crisis.

"Data from the CDC shows that rural counties in New York have higher rates of suicide than urban counties. And data from the New York State Department of Health shows that the rate of suicides outside New York City is increasing. To prevent these deaths, we need to understand with greater certainty the root causes of suicide among rural residents, and make sure they have access to the resources they need. The experts on the Rural Suicide Prevention Council will help save more lives," said Senator Helming.

[According to the most recent data available from the New York State Department of Health](#), suicides are the second leading cause of death due to injuries among all age groups in the state. In 2014, there were 1,639 suicides in the state. About 68 percent occurred outside New York City. While the rate of suicides in New York City has remained relatively stable over the years, the rate in the rest of the state has increased 27 percent since 2000.

Veterans Crisis Line

The Veterans Crisis Line is a free and confidential source of support for veterans in crisis, and their family and friends. Call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 and press 1; or text 838255. Online chat is also available at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat.

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