

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2896

To amend title 10, United States Code, to establish a separation oath for members of the Armed Forces who are separating from military service.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 26, 2023

Mr. MAST introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To amend title 10, United States Code, to establish a separation oath for members of the Armed Forces who are separating from military service.

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 “Oath of Exit Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF SEPARATION OATH FOR MEM-**
6 **BERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-
8 ings:

9 (1) The United States Armed Forces is the
10 largest, all-volunteer military force in the world, yet

1 less than 1 percent of the American population
2 serves in the Armed Forces.

3 (2) Each branch of the Armed Forces (Army,
4 Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, and
5 Coast Guard) instills in its members a sense of duty
6 and obligation to the United States, their branch of
7 service, and their comrades-in-arms.

8 (3) The Department of Veterans Affairs esti-
9 mates that approximately 20 veterans of the Armed
10 Forces commit suicide each day, and a veteran's risk
11 of suicide is 21 percent higher than an adult who
12 has not served in the Armed Forces.

13 (4) The Department of Veterans Affairs is ag-
14 gressively undertaking measures to prevent these
15 tragic outcomes, yet suicide rates among veterans
16 remain unacceptably high.

17 (5) Upon enlistment or appointment in the
18 Armed Forces, a new member is obligated to take an
19 oath of office or oath of enlistment.

20 (6) Most members of the Armed Forces view
21 this oath not as an imposition, but as a promise that
22 they are bound to fulfill.

23 (b) ESTABLISHMENT OF SEPARATION OATH.—Sec-
24 tion 502 of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

1 (1) in subsection (b), by striking “The oath”
2 and inserting “An oath established by this section”;

3 (2) by redesignating subsection (b), as amend-
4 ed, as subsection (c); and

5 (3) by inserting after subsection (a) the fol-
6 lowing new subsection (b):

7 “(b) SEPARATION OATH.—Prior to retirement or
8 other separation from the armed forces, other than sepa-
9 ration pursuant to the sentence of a court-martial, a mem-
10 ber of an armed force may take the following oath:

11 “‘I, _____, recognizing that
12 my oath to support and defend the Constitution of
13 the United States against all enemies, foreign and
14 domestic, has involved me and my fellow members in
15 experiences that few persons, other than our peers,
16 can understand, do solemnly swear (or affirm) to
17 continue to be the keeper of my brothers- and sis-
18 ters-in-arms and protector of the United States and
19 the Constitution; to preserve the values I have
20 learned; to maintain my body and my mind; to give
21 help to, and seek help from, my fellow veterans; and
22 to not bring harm to myself or others. I take this
23 oath freely and without purpose of evasion, so help
24 me God.’”.

25 (c) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—

1 (1) SECTION HEADING.—The heading of section
2 502 of title 10, United States Code, is amended to
3 read as follows:

4 **“§ 502. Enlistment oath and separation oath: who**
5 **may administer”.**

6 (2) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections
7 at the beginning of chapter 31 of title 10, United
8 States Code, is amended by striking the item relat-
9 ing to section 502 and inserting the following new
10 item:

“502. Enlistment oath and separation oath: who may administer.”.

