

FROM KATHERINE B. MCGUIRE, APA CHIEF ADVOCACY OFFICER

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Advancing Basic Research to Inform the Science of Suicide

On Nov. 12, APA showcased the importance of basic research on suicide at a congressional briefing co-sponsored by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. Two expert psychologists on the science of suicide, APA Board of Directors Member Dr. [Mitch Prinstein](#), of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and Dr. [David Jobes](#), of The Catholic University of America, highlighted how basic research in areas such as response to stress informs evidence-based practice on suicide prevention and treatment. The briefing was hosted with the offices of Rep. Ben McAdams (D-Utah) and Rep. Anthony Gonzalez (R-Ohio), who both discussed the impact suicide has had in their districts. They are sponsoring the [Advancing Research to Prevent Suicide Act](#) (H.R. 4704), which encourages the National Science Foundation to support multidisciplinary, fundamental research on the underpinnings of suicide. APA's efforts to support the bill helped it to pass the [House Science, Space, and Technology Committee](#) on Nov. 14.

For more information, contact Craig Fisher at cfisher@apa.org.

Working with Congress to Draft Military Mental Health Legislation

On Veterans Day, Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-Hawaii) introduced three new military mental health bills drafted with APA:

- **The Payment and Reimbursement (PAR) Act** directs the Government Accountability Office to conduct a study of TRICARE mental health care provider reimbursement, following two years of dramatic slashes to psychologists' reimbursements by third party payers.
- **The Recovery Engagement and Coordination for Health–Military Innovations for Life (REACH MIL) Act** requires the Department of Defense (DoD) to develop and pilot a predictive analytics model of suicide risk in its active duty military population, similar to the Department of Veterans Affairs' promising new artificial intelligence program for identifying veterans at high risk of suicide (REACH VET).
- **The Refer and Equip Veterans and Military Personnel (REVAMP) Act** would improve DoD's existing Transition Assistance Program, such as requiring that a mental health component be considered mandatory for all military personnel who retire or separate from active service.

For more information, contact Heather O'Beirne Kelly, PhD, at hkelly@apa.org.

Advocating for Argosy University Doctoral Psychology Students

In a [letter](#) to Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, APA CEO Arthur C. Evans Jr., PhD, urged the department to include Argosy University in its efforts to provide debt relief to students affected by the closure of universities owned and operated by the Dream Center. Thus far, the department's action has not been extended to Argosy campuses, which shut down suddenly in March, displacing hundreds of doctoral psychology students. APA is asking that these students be provided the ability to discharge their loans and for the proposed eligibility period for debt relief to be extended to fall 2017. APA will continue its work to advocate for financial assistance for former Argosy doctoral psychology students.

For more information, contact Kenneth Polishchuk at kpolishchuk@apa.org.

Supporting the Mental Health of DACA Recipients

On Nov. 12, the U.S. Supreme Court heard the administration's appeal of lower court rulings that blocked President Trump's 2017 plan to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. The program assists about 660,000 immigrants by protecting them from deportation and providing them work permits. It does not allow for a path to citizenship. The court is expected to rule on the case in June. Earlier this year, APA [sent a letter](#) to House and Senate leadership supporting policies like those advanced in the American Dream and Promise Act of 2019 (H.R. 6) and the Dream Act of 2019 (S. 874). The letter used a scientific perspective to address the impact of fear of deportation, the importance of keeping families together and Dreamers' current experience. For example,

research demonstrates that adult immigrants who fear deportation are much more vulnerable to heart disease, asthma, diabetes, depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder.

For more information, contact Serena Dávila, JD, at sdavila@apa.org.

Applauding Progress for Equal Rights

On Nov. 13, APA representatives attended the House Judiciary Committee markup to watch the committee consider H. J. Resolution 79, which would remove a previous deadline for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Some protections inherent within the ERA include job security for pregnant women, increased paid paternity leave, protection against discrimination based on gender identity, pay equity for women, the securing of women's health-care and reproductive rights, and protections for victims of sexual assault. With the new extension of the passage deadline, Virginia could become the 38th and final state needed to introduce the ERA on a national level. Committee chairman Jerry Nadler (D-N.Y.), who led the markup, argued that the ERA is as relevant and necessary as ever. Despite counterarguments from representatives who expressed concern over the resolution's constitutionality and regard for process, the resolution passed by a 21-11 vote margin.

For more information, contact Shari E. Miles-Cohen, PhD, at smiles@apa.org.