



**Legislative Alert #113-42: SUPPORT H.R. 4305 & S. 2231, the Medical Evaluation Parity for Servicemembers (MEPS) Act**  
DEFENSE

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**Issue Background:** According to recent studies, the Army found that 20% of Army soldiers enter the service with a psychiatric disorder. Additionally, a recent study conducted by the Journal of the American Medical Association found a significant percentage of the suicides that occur in the military were committed by individuals who had never been deployed in a combat role. Despite increased awareness and expanded efforts to address behavioral health issues in the military, our service branches still face challenges when it comes to early detection and prevention. The Department of Defense (DOD) does have all potential servicemembers go through a physical assessment before they join, however, there is no mental health evaluation conducted. Hundreds of servicemembers have been misdiagnosed with personality disorders rather than the proper diagnoses of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or traumatic brain injury (TBI) upon leaving the services.

**Action Required:** Contact your Representatives and Senators and urge them to support and cosponsor H.R. 4305, introduced by Representatives Glenn Thompson (PA-05) and Tim Ryan (OH-13), and S. 2231, introduced by Senator Rob Portman (OH) and Senator John D. Rockefeller (WV), the Medical Evaluation Parity for Servicemembers (MEPS) Act. These bills would provide an individual with a mental health assessment before the individual enlists or is commissioned as an officer in the Armed Forces.

**Details (To Be Put Into Letter):**

Recent studies conducted by the U.S. Army found 20% of Army soldiers enter the service with a psychiatric disorder. Even more shocking, the Journal of the American Medical Association found that a significant percentage are the causes of suicides that occur in the military, with many being committed by individuals who have never been deployed in a combat role. While the Department of Defense (DOD) does a thorough physical assessment of individuals before they join, there is no mental health evaluation conducted. As a result, hundreds of servicemembers have been misdiagnosed with personality disorders rather than the proper diagnoses of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or traumatic brain injury (TBI) upon leaving the services.

H.R. 4305 and S. 2231 would require that a mental health assessment be conducted alongside the physical health examination for all those applying to join and serve in the Armed Forces. The examination conducted under the Medical Evaluation Parity for Servicemembers (MEPS) Act

would test for mental illnesses such as PTSD, TBI and suicidal risk. In addition, the results would serve as a baseline for future mental health assessments throughout the servicemembers' careers. By establishing the process of an exit screening, DOD would have more accurate information on a servicemembers mental health condition as they transition to civilian life. Subsequently, they would be able to provide the necessary treatment and care that the individual needs. Moreover, this legislation guarantees that these servicemembers continue to be checked up on throughout their military careers, ensuring they receive the proper treatment they require. Finally, this legislation also instructs DOD to issue a report on its ability to issue servicemembers electronic copies of their health records as they leave service, helping to make servicemembers transition to civilian life as smooth as possible.

**Take Action:** Click the "[Take Action](#)" link at the top of the Alert to immediately email and/or write to your Senators and Representatives. This is the quickest and most effective method of expressing your views to Congress. You can also write and/or e-mail the 'Details' section or edit as you desire for a more personalized communication . Also, contact friends and family and urge them to use the Contact Congress feature on AUSN's website as well. Please direct any questions concerning this issue to our Director of Legislation, Anthony Wallis, at 703-548-5800 or at [Anthony.Wallis@ausn.org](mailto:Anthony.Wallis@ausn.org).