

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2201

November 13, 2020

Governor Gretchen Whitmer
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Governor Whitmer:

Embracing suicide prevention policy should be a non-partisan pursuit that doesn't cast aside legitimate initiatives. For this reason, we were disappointed to learn you have declined to issue a "President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide" (PREVENTS) Proclamation and request an explanation for this decision.

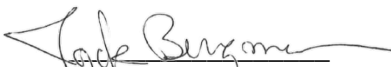
Governors in 40 other states have issued PREVENTS Proclamations since June 2020 when the PREVENTS Task Force issued the Roadmap. This Task Force was established when President Donald Trump signed Executive Order 13861, and the resulting Roadmap describes a detailed path forward on addressing the suicide crisis and its impact on Veterans through new research, treatments, legislation, public health campaigns, and – importantly – partnerships.


Your decision to not issue a PREVENTS Proclamation recognizing the goals of the Roadmap contradicts the all-in, all-of-the-above effort to combat the suicide crisis. While we recognize Michigan is participating in the Governor's Challenge, which is a PREVENTS initiative, there are many other worthy themes and initiatives in the Roadmap – and we are seeking true leadership at the state level to spread this information.


According to a recent [report](#) by Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services, there could be up to a 32 percent increase in the Michigan suicide rate due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a worst case scenario if nothing is done – so we believe that all available action should be taken to address the 20 Veteran and servicemember suicide deaths each day in our Nation and the many more suicides taking the lives of our loved ones and neighbors here in Michigan.


As you have already been asked multiple times by the Department of Veterans Affairs and Congressman Jack Bergman in his capacity as a PREVENTS National Ambassador, we are now joining as Members of the Michigan Congressional delegation to ask that you join the bipartisan coalition and sign a PREVENTS Proclamation. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.


Sincerely,



Jack Bergman
Member of Congress


Tim Walberg
Member of Congress


Fred Upton
Member of Congress


Bill Huizenga
Member of Congress


Paul Mitchell
Member of Congress


John Moolenaar
Member of Congress

