

# STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

## PROCLAMATION VETERAN AND MILITARY SUICIDE PREVENTION AND AWARENESS YEAR 2024

**WHEREAS**, the men and women who have served or are currently serving in the military are the most honorable and extraordinary members of our nation and its states; and a service member, after their immeasurable sacrifice, should be welcomed home and receive a grateful and dignifying life filled with love and care; and

**WHEREAS**, military service, while noble, increases the risk of behavioral health challenges due in part to the high stress aspects of service and deployment, chief among these concerns is the elevated risk of suicide for both veterans and actively serving military members; annually, suicide takes the lives of over 6,000 veterans and military members in the United States and many in North Dakota — a suicide rate more than 50% higher than the general public; and

**WHEREAS**, the safety and wellness of veterans and military members is a priority in the state of North Dakota, and all North Dakotans are encouraged to raise their awareness of the warning signs of mental health crises and the treatments available so that more people will be knowledgeable of how to save the lives of endangered persons; and

**WHEREAS**, the American Legion's "Be The One" program creates opportunities for people to clearly connect with veterans struggling with thoughts of suicide, by destigmatizing the fear of asking for mental support, providing peer-to-peer support and deploying FDA-approved therapeutics for veterans to identify issues and find them the resources needed for their support; and the American Legion has declared 2024 "Be The One" Year; and

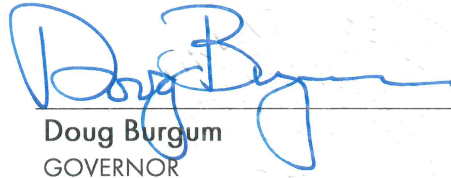
**WHEREAS**, the Governor's Challenge, led by ND Cares in partnership with federal, state and community leaders, looks to prevent suicide among veterans, actively serving military members and their families by increasing screenings for risk, promoting better connectedness and care transitions, training veterans to be peer support specialists, educating health care and mental health providers about military culture and evidence-based treatment methods and providing education about lethal means safety; and

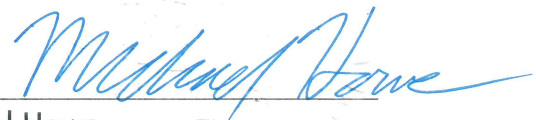
**WHEREAS**, for those struggling with mental health-related distress and unable to speak with a loved one, the 988 Suicide and Crisis hotline is a valuable, accessible and free resource which can be called or texted at any time or accessed online through 988lifeline.org; and

**WHEREAS**, North Dakotans are encouraged to learn more about the American Legion's "Be The One" program, the Governor's Challenge, the 988 Suicide and Crisis hotline and other suicide prevention and mental health initiatives and resources to increase their awareness and understanding of challenges veterans and military members face and so that by any of these means they might assist in the saving of our veterans' and military members' lives.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, as Governor of the State of North Dakota, I do hereby proclaim  
2024, **VETERAN AND MILITARY SUICIDE PREVENTION AND AWARENESS YEAR** in  
the State of North Dakota.



  
Doug Burgum  
GOVERNOR

ATTEST:   
Michael Howe  
SECRETARY OF STATE