

AMENDMENT TO RULES COMMITTEE PRINT 115-

23

OFFERED BY MR. MAST OF FLORIDA

Page 175, after line 24, insert the following:

1 **SEC. 5 ____ . ESTABLISHMENT OF SEPARATION OATH FOR**
2 **MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.**

3 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-
4 ings:

5 (1) The United States Armed Forces is the
6 largest, all-volunteer military force in the world, yet
7 less than one percent of the American population
8 serves in the Armed Forces.

9 (2) Each branch of the Armed Forces (Army,
10 Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard) in-
11 stills in its members a sense of duty and obligation
12 to the United States, their branch of service, and
13 their comrades-in-arms.

14 (3) The Department of Veterans Affairs esti-
15 mates that approximately 20 veterans of the Armed
16 Forces commit suicide each day and a veteran's risk
17 of suicide is 21 percent higher compared to an adult
18 who has not served in the Armed Forces.

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

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

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

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

13 (1) by redesignating subsection (b) as sub-
14 section (c) and, in such subsection, by striking “The
15 oath” and inserting “An oath established by this
16 section”; and

17 (2) by inserting after subsection (a) the fol-
18 lowing new subsection (b):

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

23 “‘I, _____, recog-
24 nizing that my oath to support and defend the Con-
25 stitution of the United States against all enemies,

1 foreign and domestic, has involved me and my fellow
2 members in experiences that few persons, other than
3 our peers, can understand, do solemnly swear (or af-
4 firm) to continue to be the keeper of my brothers-
5 and sisters-in-arms and protector of the United
6 States and the Constitution; to preserve the values
7 I have learned; to maintain my body and my mind;
8 and to not bring harm to myself without speaking to
9 my fellow veterans first. I take this oath freely and
10 without purpose of evasion, so help me God.’”.

11 (c) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—

12 (1) SECTION HEADING.—The heading of section
13 502 of title 10, United States Code, is amended to
14 read as follows:

15 **“§ 502. Enlistment oath and separation oath: who**
16 **may administer”.**

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

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

