

I was a veteran's advocate for 20+ years. Along the way I have worked with many, many veterans - most of whom had Post Traumatic Stress. The calming influence dogs and cats have on veterans is remarkable.

I will never forget the night a kid with who I had worked for about 3 years called me in tears. He was in his mother's garage where he had made a bed to which he retreated when things overwhelmed him. Normally he would take a book up there, but that night he took his hunting rifle. He really didn't think he could go on any more. He called to talk about it.

We talked about 45 minutes. I wasn't making headway and was getting ready to call 911 in his town. Then, his mutt did something he had never done before. The dog crawled up the ladder and into the kid's arms. That dog did something I couldn't.

At noon today the kid called me. He has been laid off for 6 weeks. Even though that could really get to him, the kid and his dog are in training to be a therapy team. The kid wants to work with other veterans with Post Traumatic Stress. His dog will be a big part of that.

I urge the committee to vote for this measure. You will save lives if you do.

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