

Testimony of  
Cindy Dubuque, MSW

**Bill 6391 AN ACT CONCERNING INCREASING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR VETERANS AND MEMBERS OF THE ARMED SERVICES.**

Three and half years ago, my sister Lisa Silberstein committed suicide on Veterans Day, 2011; she was 37 years old. Lisa, like many other brave men and women served in the armed forces and unfortunately suffered from PTSD. While Lisa did receive some treatment and did attend some support groups, the help that she received was not enough. Ironically, upon her personal items collected after her passing was a card in her wallet that she signed promising not to commit suicide.

My sister was a proud person and she did not like to show any weakness. Unfortunately, for many of our servicemen and women, admitting that they are experiencing PTSD or any other emotional or mental distress suffered from their military experience, feels like an admission of defeat or a sign of weakness. In addition to improving the screening process, we must be sure that the professionals working with our active duty soldiers and veterans are trained well enough to cut through the shame and stigma that those being screened may feel. In addition, we as a culture need to de-stigmatize mental and emotional impairments such as PTSD so that our active duty soldiers and veterans will seek out and take advantage of the services offered to them. Please support this bill so that our proud men and women get the help they need.

Thank you,  
Cindy Dubuque