



# Presidential and Gubernatorial Tweets Involving Military Servicemembers and Veterans

## RESEARCH

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## ABSTRACT

The military consistently ranks as one of the most highly favorable occupations in the United States (US). However, fewer and fewer people have contact with military veterans than in the past, a trend that is expected to continue. Since military veterans carry such high levels of favorability but continue to lose contact with society, a content analysis of 1,976 tweets from former president Donald Trump and US governors was conducted to understand how military veterans were represented in the political arena on Twitter. Tweets were pulled between January 20, 2017 and November 26, 2019. Results indicated nearly all tweets about military veterans were positive and that Republicans tweeted twice as often about veterans as Democrats did. The topics of the tweets were mostly heroism (50.8%) followed by legislative or political agendas (45.5%). Republicans also provided more quotes from veterans than Democrats did, but Republicans did not use that contact to reduce stigma surrounding mental health.

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## INTRODUCTION

The number of United States (US) military servicemembers continues to decline, partly because of the 1973 end of compulsory service, which means that fewer Americans have direct contact with military veterans (Pew Research Center, 2011). Regardless, this minority makes up 96 of the 535 members of US Congress (Shane, 2018). While only about half of the veterans who ran for Congress in 2018 were elected, the results still show a level of favorability amongst the voting public toward electing veterans into positions of legislative leadership. In fact, as McCarthy (2018) highlighted, veterans are the second most trusted profession in the US. This point is particularly useful given the numerous challenges veterans face when reintegrating into the civilian way of life, whether that be in education, employment, healthcare, or other settings. Since military veterans face unique challenges, they may feel they are not fully represented by political figures that have no military experience. This point was illustrated by the amount of pushback now President Joe Biden received for his Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary, Denis McDonough, due to his non-veteran status (Cassella & Thompson, 2020). Cassella and Thompson (2020) pointed out that many veterans organizations were disappointed, explaining that veterans felt patronized and already had trouble trusting the VA. Thus, having public support and military veteran lawmakers in Congress provides rich opportunity for legislation to be enacted that assists and supports military veterans.

Social media platforms such as Twitter have become an important tool for politicians to connect with the voting public. Research suggests that politicians and the media often operate in a symbiotic relationship to influence what the public considers the top issues facing the nation (Conway et al., 2015). Nevertheless, when it comes to military veterans, little is known about the information that politicians share with their followers. This is an important gap in the literature given that policy leaders' tweets about servicemembers and veterans could inform and persuade audience perceptions concerning the importance of servicemembers and veterans on the national agenda (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), especially considering how many followers politicians like @BarackObama (110 million) and @realDonaldTrump<sup>1</sup> (66 million) had. Additionally, at the time of writing, a spotlight was shone on the relationship among social media, veterans, and politicians as former president Donald Trump encountered criticism for statements surrounding veterans (Cobler, 2020). For example, Kranish (2020) highlighted Trump's negative remarks about the late Senator John McCain's capture and alleged remarks toward servicemembers who were killed in action being referred to as "losers."

Because of servicemembers' and veterans' favorability and the capacity for politicians to inform the public, this study asked: How are servicemembers and veterans represented when they appear in politicians' tweets?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### AGENDA-SETTING THEORY

According to McCombs and Shaw (1972), news media communicate what the general public should think *about* by focusing coverage on an issue or topic, thereby increasing the topic's salience for audiences. Their model, agenda-setting theory, is comprised of the basic function of agenda-setting, which is to make topics and attitudes salient, or prominent (McCombs et al., 2014). Agenda-setting theory also states that attributes of those topics can be made salient as well as connections between attributes and topics to others (McCombs et al., 2014). Furthermore, this concept is relative toward expansion of social media, which allows for non-media sources and individuals to post and comment on important topics, as seen in 2017 with the #TimesUp movement, 2018 with the #metoo movement (Langone, 2018), in 2019 with the arrest of Jeffrey Epstein (Winter, 2019), and in 2020 with the Black Lives Matter movement (Spivey, 2020). Agenda-setting theory not only explains how and why the media is able to make topics salient, but it also explains how media shape attitudes, behaviors, and opinions (McCombs et al., 2014). The media is capable of making various topics more prominent than others by providing more coverage of a particular topic (McCombs et al., 2014).

For example, sometimes veteran deaths from suicide are covered extensively. This makes the veteran's death salient. However, any additional details of the death become salient based on how frequently they are reported. Thus, suicide becomes the priority issue of the day, but as the amount of reporting is decreased, its salience in the public also decreases and is replaced with other topics (McCombs et al., 2014). McCombs et al. (2014) also point toward the development of a much more complex effect of agenda-setting. Attitudes, opinions, and behaviors can be impacted by the agenda-setting function because messages are bundled (McCombs et al., 2014). In the example of reporters covering veteran suicide, the emotions and attitudes that accompany that information help reinforce and make salient opinions on suicide, veterans, or mental health.

While McCombs and Shaw's (1972) original formulation of agenda-setting focused on the relationship between news coverage and public perceptions, a growing body of research has suggested that the model should account for other factors including social media (e.g., Vargo et al., 2018). Conway et al. (2015) pointed toward Twitter as a

channel that increases accessibility of the agenda-setting function for political leaders. Instead of a politician making a statement about a particular issue and the media then covering the issue, increasing its salience for the public, Conway et al. (2015) showed that social media platforms such as Twitter have made the agenda-setting function more symbiotic because politicians can respond quickly to an issue that has manifested, or respond to news reports about issues prominent to their voters. Conway et al. (2015) also pointed out that, often, politicians will only tweet about issues relevant to their political base, but that the agenda-setting function is still maintained. For example, Yang et al. (2016) reviewed how governors and former president Barack Obama used Twitter to disseminate political discourse. Their results indicated that politicians are active users, regardless of political affiliation. Interestingly, Yang et al.'s (2016) research indicated that Republican politicians were more unified in the issues they tweeted, whereas Democratic politicians had less cohesive priorities. According to agenda-setting theory, Republican voters would have a smaller but more salient set of values and topics, whereas Democratic voters would have less salient topics, but a much broader scope. For Republicans, their consolidation of voting topics is what McCombs et al. (2014) called agenda melding, which creates a stronger, community-based agenda.

## VETERANS

### Veteran Support

As McCarthy (2018) pointed out, the military and veterans are popular with the public. However, as Kleykamp et al. (2018) showed, some of this support might be overstated and based off of social desirability. In their study, Kleykamp and colleagues suggested that while there is no sense of negativity toward the military and veterans, there is a level of superficiality toward supporting the troops (Kleykamp et al., 2018). Kleykamp et al. (2018) were quick to point out that this is most likely due to the military conflict itself and not the servicemember or veterans. However, respondents who do maintain a high level of support likely relate more closely with values related to military funding, regardless of the military conflict in which service members fight.

In contrast, social desirability bias is increased when groups feel that veteran benefits might cut into social programs that benefit them, or simply disagree with the level of benefits that veterans receive (Kleykamp et al., 2018). As Burtin (2020) pointed out, veteran benefits have been an issue for the public dating back to World War I, where political entities fought against the expansion of veteran benefits due to fears about how large benefit packages would become and their impact on other social welfare programs and funding. Kleykamp et al.'s (2018)

research supported this longstanding rift, indicating that veteran support might be lower than national polls suggest. Regardless, Golby et al. (2017) highlighted the importance of public support for the military. Golby et al. (2017) tested the impact of military support by examining its relationship to military endorsements on foreign policy. In their findings, military leaders' endorsements have a positive impact on support for overseas interventions. The same relationship exists, but on a larger scale, when military leaders disagree with an intervention, meaning public support decreases (Golby et al., 2017). Therefore, given the military's high level of public support, as well as servicemembers' and veterans' ability to have an impact on topic approval, it is reasonable to wonder if politicians use veterans as a tool to garner political support on various topics.

### Veteran Stereotypes

Numerous studies have been conducted to classify how veterans are portrayed and stereotyped in the media (Kleykamp & Hipes, 2015; Parrott et al., 2018; Parrott et al., 2020; Rhidenour et al., 2017; Wilbur, 2016). In general, the public sees its military servicemembers and veterans displayed as victims of their service, deserving of support, active community members, and heroic. Even with generally positive stereotypes, Schmidt (2020) pointed out that veterans are highly critical about news coverage, especially when they feel it is exploitative. One example of media stereotyping incongruence is how one participant stated, "at least they are reliably manipulative" (Schmidt, 2020, p.16). Other complaints included that veterans felt media coverage was misinformed or biased, but most important to this paper is that veterans felt reporting was sensationalized (Schmidt, 2020). What this means is that veterans feel they are used to get people "excited" about the news article (Schmidt, 2020, p.16). It is possible that in these cases, the support for veterans is actually being exploited to gain favorability. Even more problematic is the effects of these media stereotypes of veterans and any stigma that might be caused because of it.

### Stigma

Conceptually, stigma is when a group or individual experiences labeling, stereotyping, separating from society, losing social status, and being discriminated against (Link & Phelan, 2001). Understanding the various themes that the media use to portray veterans, one can rightly see that even though no overtly negative themes exist, portraying veterans as poor, broken down victims of their service to the country removes much of their identity and autonomy, especially considering how little contact many individuals truly have with military servicemembers and veterans. The results are a stigma of veterans as victims that is portrayed

all over the media landscape (Kleykamp & Hipes, 2015; Parrott, et al., 2018; Rhidenour, et al., 2017; Wilbur, 2016; for more on media and stigma see Parrott & Eckhart, 2019).

However, the power of agenda-setting theory has the ability to offset this stigma and deconstruct this stigma. For example, Corrigan et al. (2012) stated that stigma can be reduced by providing contact with the stigmatized group. Therefore, politicians using social media, specifically Twitter, could utilize quotes from veterans to increase contact with users who otherwise would not hear from veterans.

Indeed, researchers point toward social media platforms such as Twitter as a primary source for news and information in modern society (e.g., Geiger, 2019). As noted previously, Conway et al. (2015) reported that Twitter acts as a symbiotic mechanism where politicians, media outlets, and constituency can interact immediately. During the Trump administration, social media garnered growing influence over the political landscape in the US, permitting politicians to (a) bypass traditional media gatekeepers such as newspaper and television journalists, and (b) to reverse the agenda: instead of news informing the public's understanding of what issues are most important, politicians can generate news coverage by posting on social media, speaking directly to constituents while influencing the nightly news.

Given the growing role of social media in legislative and political discussions, the present study builds off previous studies of media representation of veterans by examining Twitter/tweets from sitting governors and the president at the time of this writing. The study seeks to determine how politicians represent veterans in tweets, which is important as evidenced by the number of stereotypes of veterans that exist within the media. Given social norms to "support the troops," and politicians' inclination to avoid upsetting their constituents, we first anticipate:

**H1:** Politicians' tweets concerning veterans will primarily communicate positive sentiment rather than negative sentiment.

**H2:** There will be no difference between tweets about veteran heroism between parties. Because we anticipate that politicians will tweet about veterans positively, and that heroism will be represented equally between parties, we now inquire about what tweets are about and whether veterans are being given a voice.

Additionally, due to the frequent reporting of the mental health crisis among military servicemembers and veterans, the study also addresses Twitter topics about veterans:

**R1:** Which topics occur most often in tweets about veterans?

Finally, the study investigates how veterans are being used in tweets from politicians.

**R2:** In what ways are quotes (contact) from veterans represented in tweets?

## METHOD

These hypotheses and research questions were tested and answered by conducting a quantitative content analysis.

### SAMPLE

Two members of the research team reviewed 2,433 tweets from governors (27 Republicans, 23 Democrats) and then President Donald Trump (Republican). The dates of the tweets ranged between January 20, 2017 and November 26, 2019 and were retrieved from Crimson Hexagon. Crimson Hexagon is a digital library that collects social media posts, tweets, etc. Twitter was chosen due to the role it plays for politicians connecting with the voting public (Conway et al., 2015). Specifically, tweets were collected if they mentioned *vet\**, or *#vet\**.<sup>2</sup> These terms included references to vets, veterans as well as associated hashtags. However, it also included tweets with terms like veteran lawmakers or veto. After their removal, the final sample resulted in 1,976 tweets.

### Coding Procedures

Coders were two doctoral students, one from mass communication and the other from social work. Intercoder reliability was achieved by independently coding a sample ( $n = 112$ ) of tweets from former president Barack Obama (Democrat), using the same search terms from dates between January 17, 2011 (first tweet available) through January 19, 2017. The first attempt at intercoder reliability failed. The coders then discussed what caused disagreements, restructured the coding protocol and recoded the entire sample again. The second attempt resulted in a reliable coding protocol for the two coders. **Table 1** presents the coders' percent agreement, Krippendorff's Alpha, and operational definitions for the variables used in the study.

### Coding Scheme

**Sentiment Toward Veterans.** Coders determined whether the tweet was positive or negative toward *veterans* by coding positive or negative. Any reference to supporting veterans was also coded as positive.

VARIABLE	OPERATIONAL DEFINITION	% AGREEMENT, KRIPPENDORF'S ALPHA
Story About Vets	Is the story about military veterans and not something else?	100%, 1
Political Affiliation	What is the politician's political affiliation?	100%, 1
Veteran Sentiment	What is the sentiment toward veterans?	100%, 1
Topic		
	Does the tweet mention physical health?	100%, 1
	Does the tweet mention mental health?	100%, 1
	Does the tweet mention employment?	99.1%, .981
	Does the tweet mention education?	100%, 1
	Does the tweet mention legislation or political agenda?	93.8%, .871
	Does the tweet mention reintegration?	99.1%, .929
	Does the tweet mention deployment or combat?	96.4%, .814
	Does the tweet mention the hero concept?	95.5%, .839
	Is the tweet about something else?	90.2%, .777
	Is the tweet incomplete?	99.1%, .905
Pairing	Does the tweet mention voting for legislation or politicians?	85.7%, .725
Contact	Does the tweet quote a veteran?	98.2%, .959

**Table 1** Variables, Operational Definitions, and Reliability Statistics.

**Topic.** Topics were not coded as mutually exclusive and were coded as present or absent in the tweet.

**Physical Health.** Physical health was coded present if the tweet mentioned physical health or disability.

**Mental Health.** Mental health was coded present if the tweet mentioned mental health.

**Employment.** Employment was coded present if the tweet mentioned employment, unemployment rates, etc.

**Education.** Education was coded present if the tweet mentioned topics like education benefits.

**Legislation/Political Agenda.** Legislation was coded present if the tweet mentioned a politician's agenda, legislation, or election.

**Reintegration.** Reintegration was coded present if the tweet mentioned veterans reintegrating into civilian life.

**Hero.** Hero was coded present if the tweet mentioned honor or honoring veterans, as well as the term hero.

**Deployment (combat).** Deployment was coded present if the tweet mentioned anything about troop numbers outside of the US or past, present, and future conflicts.

**Other.** Other was coded as present if anything not listed was mentioned. The topic was then listed in a text box below.

**Voting.** Coders noted present if a tweet contained a reference for voting for a politician/legislation.

**Contact.** Coders noted present if a tweet contained a quote from a vet.

## RESULTS

Descriptive statistics were run to highlight the makeup of tweets about veterans. From the sample ( $n = 1,976$ ), 67.7% ( $n = 1,337$ ) were from Republicans and 32.3% ( $n = 638$ ) were from Democrats. The five most frequent Twitter posters were @realdonaldtrump (R) ( $n = 194$ , 9.8%), @douglucey (AZ-R) ( $n = 118$ , 6%), @massgovernor (MA-R) ( $n = 116$ , 5.9%), @govparsonmo (MO-R) ( $n = 101$ , 5.1%), and @govricketts (NE-R) ( $n = 95$ , 4.9%). The five most infrequent political Twitter posters were @governorgordon (WY-R) ( $n = 2$ , .1%), @govdunleavy (AK-R) ( $n = 4$ , .2%), @govjanetmills (ME-D) and @govstitt (OK-R) ( $n = 5$ , .2%), and @govbilllee (TN-R) ( $n = 6$ , .3%).

Confirming the first hypothesis, the sentiment toward veterans was completely positive ( $n = 1,974$ , 99.9%). One example of a positive tweet is

Just met John James of Michigan. He has every single quality to be your next Great Senator from Michigan. When the people of Michigan get to know John, they will say he is a true star. Also, distinguished Military and a Combat Vet! (@realDonaldTrump, 2018)

Other examples include "Thank you @MoVetOrgs and @MOVetsComm for stopping by the Governor's Office! We

are striving to make Missouri the most Veteran friendly state!” (@GovParsonMO, 2019) and “California is proud to stand by our veterans and will continue to honor those who answered our nation’s call. #CaliforniaForAll” (@CAGovernor, 2019).

The second hypothesis suggested there would be no statistically significant difference between political party (Republican, Democrat) and the use of heroism in tweets. To investigate, a two-tailed t-test was conducted and found no significant difference between Republicans and Democrats  $t(1973) = -1.444, p = .149$ . Therefore, H2 was supported. An example of a tweet referencing heroism is

A huge congrats to Linda Dickinson for receiving the Veteran of the Month award! Linda served her country honorably as a member of the U.S. Air Force Nurse Corps. She is a nurse & has volunteered extensively with the Vietnam Veterans of America & raised money for veterans causes. (@GovSisolak, 2019)

Another example is “Arizona honors our veterans. It’s my honor to stop at #VFW Post 9401 in Lake Havasu City to thank our combat veterans for their service. #SecureAZ” (@dougducey, 2018).

The first research question asked which issues were covered most frequently (**Table 2**). In this sample, heroism/honor was recorded 1,003 times (50.8%), legislation or political agendas 899 times (45.5%), employment 243 times (12.3%), deployment or combat 115 times (5.8%), education 51 times (2.6%), mental health 50 times (2.5%), physical health 36 times (1.8%), reintegration 24 times (1.2%), and “other” 511 times (25.9%).

The second research question asked how veteran quotes were used in tweets. Tweets rarely quoted veterans. However, Republican politicians were the only party to use quotes from veterans ( $n = 5$ ). These quotes were paired with

tweets that contained positive political sentiment ( $n = 1$ ) and positive VA sentiment ( $n = 1$ ). Quotes from veterans were also paired with topics about legislation ( $n = 2$ ), hero/honor ( $n = 3$ ), and tweets that suggested voting for a piece of legislation or a political candidate ( $n = 2$ ).

## DISCUSSION

This study used agenda-setting theory to investigate how politicians used military servicemembers and veterans in their tweets. To do this, 1,976 tweets from governors and then President Trump were analyzed. Interestingly, Republicans doubled the number of tweets about servicemembers and veterans compared to Democratic governors. As noted earlier, Republican politicians tend to tweet about fewer topics (Conway et al., 2015), and since more servicemembers and veterans identify as Republican than Democrat (Newport, 2009), a Republican focus on veterans makes sense (Kleykamp et al., 2018). It was also expected that as Commander-in-Chief, Trump would tweet about servicemembers and veterans more than anyone else. For governors, however, it could be expected that states with the highest tweet count would also have larger population densities of veterans. Arizona, one of the top 10 homes for veterans, ranked second; however, one of the more surprising results of the study was that posts from Massachusetts, Missouri, and Nebraska were the next most frequent (Leins, 2019). According to Leins (2019), Massachusetts, Missouri, and Nebraska are not in the top 10 for homes of veterans. Also, all tweets about servicemembers and veterans were positive (99.9%), which comes as no surprise given the high status of servicemembers and veterans in the US (McCarthy, 2018).

The study’s second hypothesis suggested that both Democrats and Republicans would tweet about veteran

ISSUE	FREQUENCY	% OF TWEET SAMPLE
Heroism/Honor	1,003	50.8%
Legislation/Political Agenda	899	45.5%
Employment	243	12.3%
Deployment/Combat	115	5.8%
Education	51	2.6%
Mental Health	50	2.5%
Physical Health	36	1.8%
Reintegration	24	1.2%
Other	511	25.9%

**Table 2** Issues covered most frequently.

heroism equally. This hypothesis was supported, which is not surprising considering how many tweets included remarks about Veterans Day and Memorial Day, which would include both Democrat and Republican governors as well as the president. The first research question asked which veteran-related issues would be covered most frequently. Half of all tweets related to honoring servicemembers and veterans or referencing them as heroes, reinforcing the effect of agenda-setting theory (McCombs et al., 2014) and the results of previous studies that suggest both the mass media (Rhidenour et al., 2017) and the general public (Parrott et al., 2020) associate veterans with heroism. For example, Democratic Governor Phil Murphy (2018) tweeted,

Approximately 147,000 NJ veterans served in Vietnam. More than 1,500 never came back. It took our society too long to give them the recognition they deserve. Today, we recommit ourselves to ensuring they receive the care and respect they deserve. #VietnamWarVeteransDay. (@GovMurphy)

Tweets like these may be responsible for the salience of the hero stereotype found in Parrott et al. (2020). Veterans have described the association between all veterans and heroism as problematic (e.g., Schmidt, 2020), saying such stereotypes fail to account for the diversity of veteran experience and combat experience, as well as stunt veterans' growth upon reintegration into civilian society.

The second most prevalent Twitter topic centered around veteran-related legislation or political agendas (45.5%), which is important given the role of lawmakers in ensuring policies are implemented to support military service members during both their time in the military and upon reintegration into civilian society. For example, Republican Governor Ron de Santis (2019) tweeted,

With more than 1.5 million veterans living in Florida, this community makes up an important part of our state's identity. Today, I was proud to sign HB 501 and HB 427 to support these brave men and women who have served our nation and fought for our freedom. (@GovRonDeSantis)

Despite the attention to legislative issues, mental health, an important subject facing military service members and veterans, received little overall attention. In fact, mental health only garnered 2.5% of all tweets. This is unfortunate because one of the more important things that can be done to bolster mental health services for servicemembers and veterans is to nurture mental health and well-being and to help reduce their risk of suicide. Venturing back to McCarthy's (2018) point

about how favored the military is, politicians' tweets have an opportunity to promote worthwhile legislative agendas that would likely be favored by the public. Modern military service members are more likely than previous generations to be deployed several times, increasing the potential for negative combat experiences as well as increased stress at home (e.g., romantic relationships, parent/child relationships, and interrupted civilian employment for Guard members). While mental health services can be accessed through the Department of Veterans Affairs, there is reliance among the veteran population on private mental health care providers. Nonetheless, most states have underfunded, understaffed mental health systems that operate in a society where seeking help remains stigmatized. This is particularly the case for military service members and veterans, who work(ed) in a culture conducive to mental health stigma. Veteran suicide has been described as one of the largest issues for the veteran population, with an estimated 18 veterans completing suicide every day (US Department of Veterans Affairs, 2020).

The study's second research question asked how quotes from servicemembers and veterans were used in tweets. Overall, there were only five tweets that contained quotes from servicemembers or veterans. Republicans were the only party to quote veterans in their tweets. Overall, these tweets were positive and not used to attack other politicians or legislation. As noted in Corrigan et al. (2012), contact is one mechanism for combating and reducing stereotypes and stigma. While Republicans did use Twitter to magnify servicemember and veteran voices, they, as did Democrats, missed an opportunity to reduce stereotypes of veterans and reduce the stigma of mental health services.

## LIMITATIONS

This study fails to capture how US military servicemembers and veterans might be used during an election cycle; however, it does show how politicians tweet about servicemembers and veterans once in office. It is our recommendation that future studies examine how veterans might be used in political campaigns. Future studies might also include how those in Congress use their image and how the public perceives servicemember and veteran endorsements of politicians. Also, understanding how servicemembers and veterans feel about politicians tweeting about them could also highlight ways politicians could improve. Furthermore, understanding how politicians and veterans interact through Twitter and other social media outlets could be motivated to support various politicians and their agendas. Finally, while the study did find that politicians seldomly discuss the mental health of our veterans, efforts by politicians to reduce mental health should be included in future studies.

## CONCLUSION

Military servicemembers and veterans continue to be considered favorably in US society (McCarthy, 2018), making them an important population in the political arena. This study reviewed how the president and governors referred to veterans in their tweets between January 20, 2017 and November 26, 2019. Results indicated that they often used tweets to honor servicemembers and veterans or highlight their heroism. Republican politicians tweeted substantially more about servicemembers and veterans compared to their Democratic counterparts. This is explained by Republicans' tendency to tweet more often about a smaller number of political issues; since more servicemembers and veterans identify as Republican, this connection makes sense (Lythgoe, 2020). Additionally, tweets from politicians were relatively homogenous, leaving out topics such as deployments and conflict, physical and mental health, education, and reintegration. Instead, politicians chose to tweet about the hero stereotype that Parrott et al. (2020) found salient in public opinion. This decision is likely related to the public's positive attitudes toward the military (McCarthy, 2018). Furthermore, few tweets contained quotes from servicemembers or veterans, which inhibits veterans' ability to connect with the civilian population, correct stereotypes, or reduce stigma surrounding health issues.

## NOTES

- 1 At the time of publication, @realdonaldtrump was suspended from Twitter.
- 2 Asterisk was used to collect search terms beyond vet and #vet.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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