



Health Committee –Introduced

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Suicide Prevention Training Position

By Liu

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Position Statement:

The State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council supports legislation requiring suicide prevention training for school faculty every time they review their license, the formation of a suicide prevention advisory board, and the creation of a suicide action plan by each school that would include increased school to state communication in regards to suicide.

Position

It is the position of the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council, the voice of the young citizens of Iowa, that [bill number], requiring suicide prevention training for faculty be enacted, the formation of a suicide prevention advisory board, and the creation of a suicide action plan by each to that would include increased school to state communication in regards to suicide. This legislation would allow school staff to recognize the signs of suicidal teenagers, augmenting the probability that signs of potential harm will be addressed early. It would also give each school an effective response in the case that a suicide does occur, and also allow them to communicate with departments in the government.

Rationale

This bill was prompted by an incident in the Johnston community, where two students took their lives due to possibly avoidable circumstances. These two students seemed like perfectly happy kids, but faculty were not educated on the warning signs of suicidal teenagers, so teachers were not able to detect these signs and help the students.

Suicide is the second-leading cause of death among young adults in Iowa. Oftentimes, young adults contemplating suicide have signs of irregular behavior. This legislation will prepare faculty and appropriate officials to recognize these potential signs of irregular behavior in students, augmenting the probability that signs of potential harm will be addressed early. Under this legislation, faculty would be required to undergo suicide prevention every time they renew their license or certification.

In the case that a suicide does occur at a school, the school should be able to respond appropriately and effectively. Having a suicide action plan would give schools an immediate response to the suicide and increased school to state communication with the Iowa Department of Public Health, Department of Education, and other relevant agencies that would be able to allocate additional resources to the school.

The formation of a suicide prevention advisory board would allow the legislature to stay updated on suicide in Iowa and the council would therefore be able to advise the general Assembly on relevant policies to alleviate the suicide rate in Iowa.

Not every suicide can be prevented, but with this bill, the lives of young adults will be saved.

Recommended Action

The suicide prevention training for teachers called for in [Insert bill here] have been proposed before in the state of Iowa and was passed in the Senate last year. The cost of this training is approximately \$500,000 every fiscal year. As advocates for the well-being of our state's youth, SIYAC believes that this bill is necessary to help prevent suicide in young adults. We ask that the General Assembly consider supporting this bill during the 2016 legislative session.