

Testimony on SB 5525-Support for POP 402

Oregon State Legislature
Ways & Means Human Services Subcommittee
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Beyer and Nosse and Members of Ways & Means Human Services Subcommittee:

Lines for Life supports POP 402. Lines for Life's mission is to prevent substance and suicide and promote mental wellness. We do this in several ways. We operate 24/7 crisis lines including YouthLine, the Senior Loneliness Line, and the Oregon Suicide Prevention Line. We operate a rapid response team deployed when there's a youth suicide in a community and provide an annual suicide prevention conference.

The suicide problem in Oregon is nothing short of staggering. It is the second leading cause of death for young people 15 – 34. In 2017 Oregon saw the highest number of suicides we have ever seen with 825 deaths. This says nothing of the attempts which are generally thought to happen at a ratio of four to one for completed suicides. In Oregon in 2017 we lost 107 young people to suicide.

Oregon needs this bill because suicide is the second leading cause of death for Oregonians 15-34. In 2017 Oregon saw the highest number of suicides we have ever seen with 825 deaths. In 2017 we lost 107 young people to suicide. Overall Oregon is, sadly, well above the national average of 13.5 deaths per 100,000. Our Oregon rate hovers around 18 per 100,000. In the rural county with the highest death by suicide rate in Oregon that number averaged 55 per 100,000 between 2013 and 2016. Nearly every one of our rural counties have higher suicide death rates than our urban counties.

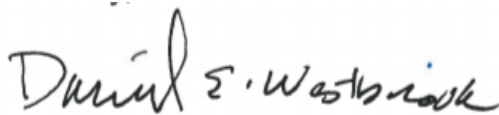
Each person who dies by suicide has a ripple effect. Research suggests their death touches at least six other people. These are family members, friends, and co-workers who are frequently traumatized by the suicide. We are losing parents and grandparents, brothers and sisters to this nearly silent epidemic.

In addition to the deep emotional impact that suicide has on families, workplaces and communities. It is estimated that suicide cost Oregon \$834,385,092 in 2018.

Today you have a historic opportunity to vote for suicide prevention resources the breadth and scope of which Oregon has never seen before. POP 402 will be spent funding the 2016-2020 priorities outlined in Oregon's Youth Suicide and Prevention Plan that the Oregon Legislature mandated in 2014. It also funds for the development of an Adult Suicide Prevention and Postvention Plan. This will mark the first time that Oregon has a suicide prevention plan across the lifespan. An adult plan is an essential tool when 90% of the deaths by suicide in Oregon occur among those over the age of 24. POP 402 will also Expand School-Based Mental Health services a crucial step towards reducing youth suicide.

I urge you to support POP 402 in SB 5525.

Sincerely,



David Westbrook, COO
Lines for Life