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Representative Andrea Salinas, Chair
Oregon House Committee on Health Care
900 Court St. NE, Salem Oregon 97301

Re: Support of the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide

Committee Chair Representative Andrea Salinas and members of the House Committee on Health Care:

In 2017, Oregon lost 107 young people to suicide. One of those losses was my daughter's 6th grade classmate. As a seasoned prevention, intervention and postvention professional, and as a member of the Alliance, this loss hit home—hard. My gratitude for the effective, painstaking and dedicated work of the Alliance amplified while I watched my little girl reel from her loss. I urge you to secure the future of the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide through including it in statute.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people 15 – 34. In 2017, Oregon experienced the highest number of suicides we have ever seen: 825 confirmed suicide losses. Nearly every rural Oregon county experiences higher suicide losses than urban counties. Sadly, research indicates that suicide attempts occur at a ratio of four to one for suicide deaths and survivors of suicide loss are at higher risk of developing major depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicide risk. Considering the impact of suicide upon our youth and our future, I know you share my concern.

Suicide is preventable. The Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide offers an informed, comprehensive, mindful, and inclusive approach to suicide prevention and postvention healing in Oregon. Members of the Alliance include youth, subject matter experts, suicide attempt survivors, suicide loss survivors, and data experts.

We have a good thing with the Alliance. Let's make sure we keep it.

~Kimberlee