

March 24, 2021

Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair
Senate Committee on Education

RE: Support Senate Bill 782

Chair Dembrow and members of the committee,

I'm an Oregon high-school student and member of Students for a Healthy Oregon. I'd like to ask for your support for Senate Bill 782.

A month ago my close friend's brother died by suicide. He was funny, kind, popular, and a loved member of the football team at his school. Yet no one knew he was hurting. Folding pamphlets for his memorial service was the most heartbroken I have ever felt, as I was watching the face of a 15 year old be remembered on an obituary for something that could have been prevented. At the service, it was like I could physically see his family's heart breaking. This tragedy hit every corner of our community, not just his closest family and friends.

My experience with mental health did not start one month ago. I could retell the story of finding out a boy at my own school had died by suicide 3 years ago, the story of at least four other close friends who have self-harmed and had suicidal thoughts without access to professional help, and the story of a dozen more friends who have struggled with mental illness to varying extents all before the age of 18; including myself.

There is and has been a stigma surrounding mental health and mental illness for years, but our generation is working to break down those walls. The suicide epidemic will not stop unless we all step up and start fighting for change, because no one deserves to become a statistic.

Please join us in support of Senate Bill 782.

Respectfully,
Cassidy Miller