

Support for HB 3037

Monday, February 15, 2021

House Committee on Behavioral Health

Chair Sanchez, Reps. Moore-Green, Nosse, Lively, Morgan, Reynolds, Salinas, Sollman, and Wright,

I am writing to support HB 3037. This bill would allow for reporting of a young person's suicide to their community if they die in a county that is not their own. Youth suicide can devastate a school or college community. When that young person comes from another city to live, work, or attend school, the former community may not be notified through governmental authorities. News of the young person's death may arrive through social media, word of mouth, or other methods. Hearing of a loved one's death through social media or other means can increase unnecessary trauma and confusion people feel.

Schools and colleges often have procedures for contacting their communities and supporting survivors. However, such support cannot be offered if proper notifications and public health agencies are not involved. The accuracy of public health records may also be affected and thus underestimate or overestimate the number of deaths by suicide in their community. This could give rise to complacency regarding the urgency of suicide prevention efforts. I work for Portland Public Schools Student Success & Health Department. I am also the school psychologist at Lincoln High School. I am a member of a school community that takes seriously the need for trauma-informed, evidence-based, and culturally mediated procedures for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. With the support and direction of my administrators and colleagues, I would urge you to consider supporting the introduction of HB 3037.

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