

Submitter:

Melissa Watson

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB3643

I am writing to share my support of the designation of October 9th as suicide awareness day. October 9th 2024 changed my life forever.

Losing Mikalynn and seeing the effects her loss had and continues to have has really opened my eyes to how overwhelming the suicide numbers are, not just in Oregon but everywhere. Before this day, I was oblivious to how rampant suicide had become in the community and the schools especially. I am a mother. I pride myself on being a good mother and an involved mother. Yet I had never spoken to my children prior to this very day about suicide. How is that possible? I have seen the articles, I've known people who have lost loved ones. I've received the devastating emails from our very own schools multiple times when a child has gone too soon from suicide. Yet I didn't know all the facts. Losing Mikalynn and then subsequently watching her family and community rise up to share her story, to use her legacy to make changes and to inspire families to have these tough conversations has really changed me as a person, a mother and a friend.

Sitting down with my 12 year old son in his bedroom under the glow of his teal and purple lights that he displayed for Mikalynn. I realized he wasn't too young. He knew more than I thought. He had even known others who have mentioned suicide. My heart broke having this tough conversation but oh man, did I see the need for it. We haven't stopped talking since and in honor of Mikalynn I hope others never stop talking either. Her legacy is reminding us to check in, talk about it, don't be fooled into thinking suicide can only "look" a certain way. Be better and Love Like Mikalynn.

Please consider this designation of October 9th as I truly believe it will have a beautiful and positive impact on our state as a whole.