

Submitter:

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On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB3643

Ellie Foust, Ronnie Root, and Mikalynn Morris. These three McMinnville high school students were victims of death by suicide, each within the year of 2024. Ellie passed on January 1st, 2024. Ronnie left us on February 21st, 2024. And one of my best friends, Mikalynn, passed away on October 9th, 2024. These students, these youth, touched so many people's lives. They had close friends, and people who loved and cherished them. Yet, it wasn't enough. I firmly believe it needs to be recognized the impact that these deaths had on the community. With each passing, I remember the school assuring the students of the usual comforts; saying phrases and ideas like "You are not alone" and "Reach out". Both of which have provided less and less comfort each time. So now, I want to use this opportunity to raise awareness about the topic of mental health and suicide, and to move forward with the creation Oregon Youth Suicide Awareness day. Due to these eye-opening events that have occurred, the creation of a day to remember and acknowledge these teenagers, is very imperative to me. As someone whose best friend suffered in silence, I want to help others understand the significance of this problem.

October 9th was a day that will forever be etched in my head. I remember that day like it was yesterday. I have a vivid recollection of when I was first told the news, and I remember thinking it couldn't be true. Some days I still don't. The day prior to Mikalynn's passing, she asked me to lunch with her. Every day I think about those thirty minutes. I scan through my memories looking for any signs that I missed. The day of October 9th does not bring me joy, the memories are not ones that I would like to relive. However, I would love it if we gave that day a new meaning. Yes, it will always be full of sorrow and loss. But if we made it Oregon Youth Suicide Awareness Day, it can be a day full of hope, and a chance to remind this state of who we have lost, and the struggles the youth of today are facing. The creation of this bill allows my peers and I to know that people are taking this seriously, adults do notice it, and these issues are being addressed. In honor of Ellie and Ronnie, and in honor of my beautiful Mikalynn Morris. Thank you, and try to remember to Love Like Mikalynn.