

2/27/15

FROM: Southern CT Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

TO: CT General Assembly Public Health Committee Members

**RE: HB 6276 – AN ACT CONCERNING TRAINING OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION**

Dear Public Health Committee Members,

As members of the Board of Directors for the Southern CT Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, we strongly urge you to support the proposed bill HB 6276, which is having a public hearing on Wednesday March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015 in your committee.

In Connecticut, suicide is the second leading cause of death for college students and the third leading cause of death for youth ages 10-17 and young adults ages 18-24 (CDC, 2010). The 2009 Connecticut School Health Survey of 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders found that in the past 12 months:

- 25% of youth felt sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 or more weeks
- 14% of students seriously considered attempting suicide
- 11% of students made a plan about how they would attempt suicide
- 7.4% of students actually attempted suicide one or more times

But this is not just about the numbers. On June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014 Trumbull High School lost one of their best and brightest, Abby Anderson, who was 15 years old and who lost the battle of depression and subsequently ended her own life. The loss continues to be felt by her family, the school, and the surrounding community.

At AFSP, we believe that suicide is preventable. We want our health professionals throughout the state of Connecticut to have the best chance at saving youth and HB 6276 is a great step forward in making that a reality. By requiring health professionals to have three to six hours of training in youth suicide we can provide them with the knowledge and skills to intervene effectively with youth at risk. Connecticut is a leader in best practices in mental health – we have seen this type of suicide prevention legislation already pass in Washington yet this type of state policy is still new on the national scene. Lets put Connecticut on the map for being a national leader in youth suicide prevention. Lets put our youth first.

If you have any questions or would like us to provide additional information, please let us know. We appreciate your time and consideration and we urge you to support this bill.

Sincerely,

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