



ROB STAFSHOLT

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 29th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708-8953

DATE: October 24, 2019
RE: **Testimony on 2019 Assembly Bill 531**
TO: Members of the Assembly Committee on Education
FROM: Representative Rob Stafsholt and Senator Luther Olsen

Good morning and thank you for taking the time to hear this important bill on student identification cards including contact information for suicide prevention hotlines.

The number of lives taken by suicide among young people continues to grow across the state and country. Sometimes, a kind voice on the other side of the phone, someone that isn't a friend, a parent, or relative, can save a life.

This recommendation came from Robin Patrick – a parent in Wausau who is here today and whose family was affected by a youth suicide. The bill requires all future student IDs distributed by schools across the state to include the telephone number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, or, if the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline ceases operations, another national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to individuals in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. Days and times that students are not in school with the resources available there. This bill is cost neutral and is not a requirement to print IDs if a school does not currently do so. It is not retroactive, and only affects newly printed IDs going forward.

Printing these support numbers is a simple tool that schools can use to raise awareness of suicide to their students, and potentially save the life of a young person in Wisconsin. This legislation is only one piece of a larger puzzle that we must work on, but even this one piece may save a life.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. We encourage you all to join me in supporting this important piece of legislation.



Luther S. Olsen
State Senator
14th District

TO: Assembly Committee on Education
FROM: Senator Luther Olsen
DATE: Thursday, October 24, 2019
SUBJECT: Testimony for Assembly Bill 531

Thank you Chairman Thiesfeldt and members of the Assembly Committee on Education for holding a hearing and allowing me to testify in support of Assembly Bill 531 (AB 531).

This bill was drafted as part of the package of bills that came out of the Speaker's Task Force on Suicide Prevention. The task force was created earlier this session and held six public hearings throughout the state, it was charged with evaluating the current resources available for suicide prevention as well as identifying areas that could be improved upon.

The number of lives that are taken by suicide is going up not only in the state, but across the nation. For many people who are struggling it is easier to discuss personal problems with someone who isn't a close friend, parent, or relative and for young people it can be even more confusing knowing where to turn in times of need. The anonymity that a phone helpline provides along with the kind reassuring voice on the other side has helped to save numerous lives.

This legislation is based on a suggestion that was brought to the task force's attention by a family that was affected by youth suicide. It will require that all future student identification cards that are distributed by schools include the telephone number for the one of the national suicide prevention hotlines that provide free, confidential, emotional support to people who call in. This bill does not require schools to print identification cards if they do not already do so. It is our hope that by printing this information on the back of school IDs it will help raise awareness and potentially save the lives of students who are in emotional distress and need help.

Again, thank you Chairman Thiesfeldt and members of the Assembly Education Committee for holding a hearing today. I ask for your support on AB 531 and am available to answer any questions that you may have.



October 23, 2019

To: Suicide Prevention Task Force

Re: 2019 Proposed Bill 39.54, 118.169: Student Identification Cards include Contact Information for Suicide Prevention Hotlines.

Dear Madame, Sir and Committee Members,

I am writing to provide a brief statement supporting the proposed bill named above.

As Owner, Clinical Director/Supervisor and Clinician who has worked in this field for twenty years, Bill 39.54 meets a number of critical needs in the field of mental health: it catalyzes a shift that moves us closer to accepting that "It's okay to not be okay" and promotes a "Let's Talk" culture—a way for communities to begin to know by simply, openly and succinctly discussing mental health challenges and connecting people to a roadmap for "what to do" when facing overwhelming mental health challenges and experiences, negative mental health outcomes are reduced. In addition, this movement not only works toward ending the stigma, but also proves to those who struggle that people in school, our community endorse and honor what they might be going through and value finding a way to get help: they care? Yes, we do. It proves that we no longer want individuals to hide away or to isolate during times of distress. The opportunity for a person to be able to reach out on their own via easy access to the Crisis Hotline phone numbers may help someone get out of the quandary that suicidal thinking places a person. This can be the difference.

We see and meet with over 100 patients a week in our practice with half being youth. We often initially meet people in their most challenging life moments; What we also see during their treatment plan is that regular counseling sessions help a person heal from trauma, anxiety and depression and other painful mental health diagnoses. We see the most amazing healing --of successful in developing coping skills, acquiring psycho-education and treatment modalities that promote health and wellness that in turn, reduce the interference of symptoms, often induced by high levels of distress from a history of trauma, family dynamics, school work and life stress, abuse, neglect and/or ability challenges.

What we get to see is most often a transformation that exemplifies resilient, grounded, intelligent and resourceful people who learn to embrace the human experiences they have; who learn to excel, build self-efficacy and trust themselves. With effective treatment modalities, trauma, anxiety and depression lose their power, and that person becomes empowered; conditions are moved out of the driver's seat of one's life and into a manageable place that allow them to feel good, be happy and live the life they intend to.

500 3rd Street, Suite 208- 3 & 4, Wausau, Wisconsin 54403 | www.tncwellness.com
P: 715.370.8863 | F: 715.256.8324



We need to help people GET TO treatment resources efficiently and effectively. Printing the suicide prevention, NAMI text support lines is one thing we can do to prevent suicide and help people get to effective treatment.

It is with deep gratitude that I thank you for creating this task force, for inviting us here today. Thank you on behalf of my colleagues – while we are in sessions working toward mental wellness outcomes as the story says, “One Starfish at a Time: one person, one student, one family at a time—knowing our state representatives are working to making a “Greater Good “ difference through this committee’s work across the State to advance mental wellness will be fuel in our tanks while we continue to serve our patients and their mental wellness goals.

Please feel free to be in touch should you need further information and/or collaboration.

Sincerely,

Christine A. Ellis, MA., MS., LPC

Founder, Clinical Director, Practicing Clinician



Please share your thoughts on the Proposed Bill: Hearing Testimony outline

From ann@tncwellness.com on 2019-10-23 20:32
Details Plain text

Hello Christine,
In response, I believe providing the crisis number is important because it lets the student know there is immediate help available. Hopefully, by providing this number, it can encourage and normalize the stigma reaching out for help can have. Students in general have busy school schedules and the expectations they need to meet may feel overwhelming. Having the crisis line available is important especially for the students who are not receiving counseling and have no where to turn for help.

~Ann

Ann Dixon, M.S., LPC
Licensed Professional Counselor
True North Counseling & Wellness, LLC | www.tncwellness.com
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To: Suicide Prevention Task Force

Re: Bill 39.54, 118.169

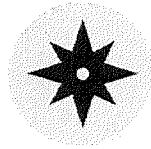
Please share your thoughts on the Proposed Bill: Hearing Testimony outline

From mindy@tncwellness.com on 2019-10-23 22:33
Details Plain text

I know we talked in supervision today about this. I guess my only comment to add is that often those who most need a suicide prevention hotline are not ones on anyone's "radar" and are unlikely to have the courage to ask for it. Having the number available to all students can save more lives than we will ever know.

Mindy

Mindy Schuette, LCSW
Psychotherapist
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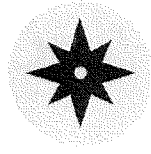
TRUE NORTH
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Educator Statement:

“From a high school teacher’s perspective, I would love to simply share that this additional availability of a hotline increases the likelihood that we will save a life. Many lives. Students, more than likely, have their ID on them at all times or certainly close by, and this resource can be available to them through that means. Students get care wrapped around them from 7:30 to 3:30 p.m. at school, but very likely need additional sources from 3:30 p.m. on. I am particularly concerned with students overnight. This additional resource could help their families, their friends, and individuals are able to have a way to get quick assistance when in crisis. Why wouldn’t we provide something that could be a proven assist to teenagers who are going through tumultuous times, simply by printing some additional numbers and letters on an ID card which they all receive? Thank you for understanding and supporting this very important initiative.” – M.L., MSE; High School Educator

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Student Statements:

Lydia Ellis, Age 16; Junior at DC Everest High School

“Having the Hotlines available will allow a person to have access and have no barriers to getting help – like if someone felt they would be a burden by reaching out—they could call on their own with this number being readily available. People who are relied on to support friends who might need help would also know where to direct someone who is struggling and not have to worry about trying to figure out what to do.”

Charlie Alves, Age 16, Junior, DC Everest High School

“I think having a suicide hotline in place at schools will benefit kids knowing (school) is where they spend the majority of their time – they can (trust) that they have support – the most support- by having access to this on their ID cards—and this connection at school.”

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TO: Assembly Committee on Education
FROM: Jodi Bloch, Director of State Government Relations, Children's Wisconsin
DATE: Thursday, October 24, 2019
RE: Support for AB 531 & AB 528 — Youth suicide prevention efforts

Chairman Thiesfeldt and members of the committee, thank you for bringing these bills forward for a hearing enabling the opportunity to provide feedback on legislation aimed at youth suicide prevention.

Children's Wisconsin (Children's) would like to acknowledge Speaker Vos, Chairwoman Ballweg, Vice Chair Doyle and all of the members of the Speaker's Task Force on Suicide Prevention for their work on this important and pressing topic. Statistics show that Wisconsin's youth suicide rate is consistently higher than the national rate: in Wisconsin, 3.4 youth per 1,000 take their own lives, compared to 2.5 youth per 1,000 nationally. Hospitalizations for mental health are also significantly higher in Wisconsin: 223 per 100,000, compared to 199 per 100,000 nationally. We know that a shortage of providers in Wisconsin, and across the country, contributes to the difficulty families have in accessing mental and behavioral health care. We also need to focus on prevention through identifying mental health concerns earlier, providing care sooner and in more places meeting kids and families where they are at, and reducing the stigma around accessing mental and behavioral health care.

We know these things to be borne out not just in the facts and statistics, but also through our experience treating and caring for kids and families. Addressing the mental and behavioral health needs of kids and families and addressing barriers to care is critically important to reducing youth suicides in Wisconsin. That's why one of Children's top priorities is to integrate mental and behavioral health (MBH) care throughout the different patient access points: from primary care to specialty care to the emergency room. We experience firsthand the difficulty in hiring MBH professionals which is why we developed an innovative MBH therapist fellowship program. We know that we need to reach kids where they are, which is why we are committed to growing our partnership with nearly 50 schools to provide MBH services across the state, from the Chippewa Valley area to Racine and in between. We also partner with other providers to find ways to collaborate to provide better care. Children's partners with ThedaCare and Ascension health systems to deliver much-needed MBH services to kids and families in the Fox Valley area through Catalpa. We can't be as impactful as we need to be without our partners, including our elected officials.

We recognize that a multifaceted, collaborative approach is needed to help prevent youth suicides and improve mental and behavioral health care access. We know that we need to improve the care and support offered to children and teens in crisis. Including suicide prevention and crisis hotlines on student identification cards, as outlined in AB 531, can help ensure students have easy and quick access to potentially life-saving support. Additionally, including this information could help to reduce stigma around accessing mental health care services and reinforce that students are not alone and that their school community cares about and supports them.

The importance of peer influence in a young person's life is well-documented. Peer-to-peer programs have demonstrated positive outcomes and increase the protective factors within a school environment. Peer-to-peer suicide prevention programs educate student leaders on mental health topics and signs of depression and suicide, increase the connection to and positive perception of supportive adults, and help reduce the stigma of mental illness.

Peer-to-peer programs encourage students to seek help and refer others who may need help to trusted adults. Additionally, these programs can help promote a more inclusive and supportive school culture. While we support the programming outlined in AB 528, we believe that the grant amounts awarded to schools by the Department of Public Instruction should be increased. Our school partners indicate that \$1,000 per school is not sufficient to cover the start-up costs of peer-to-peer suicide prevention programs; costs per school are approximately \$5,000. Therefore, we encourage you to consider amending the bill to increase the grant amount per school accordingly.

Children's is glad to serve as a resource on this important public health matter facing our state, and in particular, our most vulnerable community members. Thanks again for holding a hearing on AB 531 and AB 528. If you have any questions, comments or concerns after the hearing, please feel free to contact me via email at jbloch@chw.org or via phone at 608-217-9508.



WAUSAU WEST HIGH SCHOOL

1200 WEST WAUSAU AVENUE · WAUSAU WI · 54401 · 715-261-0850 · FAX 715-261-3260
west.wausauschools.org

October 21, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

As you may or may not know, for years Wausau West has been working to ensure our students have access to help when needed. We have done this by posting the Crisis and Suicide Prevention Hotline and the Wisconsin Addiction Recovery Helpline contact information in our school counseling office, health office, bathrooms and various bulletin boards around the building. We also cover these topics in physical education and health classes. This year a tragic incident occurred which prompted additional ideas of how to ensure our students know there is help for them. A parent, Robin Patrick, suggested we put those important contacts on the back of each student identification card. This was a great idea because we encourage our students to carry their ID cards with them at all times. Having this important information available on student ID cards will significantly increase the odds that students will be able to access help whenever the need arises. As I am sure you can imagine, students may struggle at any time of the day whether they are in school or not.

Though we are not privy to know if and how much our students have contacted the help lines provided, I am confident that our students are better equipped to handle significant struggles with this additional tool we've given them.

Thank you for considering this worthwhile initiative.

Sincerely,

Jeb Steckbauer
Principal

To whomever this may concern,

Thank you for considering this measure.....As someone who has been personally been touched by a suicide in my family (and who did this act at the age of 12 and with direct and long term devastating results to our family that still linger to this day)- I would like to highly recommend and that I support this very simple measure, to show our young people that there are others that truly care about them and that even though it may seem bleak at the time, that tomorrow is always a brand new day, with a brand new start and that someone is there to listen and help get them through their issue or crisis.

I hope that this works for you and you can state my name and title for the record-Let me know of what happens-Good Luck!

Rob

Robert B. Mielke
Mayor, City of Wausau
407 Grant Street
Wausau, WI 54403
715-261-6800

My name is Janki Patel, and I am writing this in hopes that we, as Wisconsin, can save as many Wisconsin children from suicide as we can. Since I can't be in Wisconsin in-person for this meeting, Robin Patrick is reading my statement on my behalf.

I lost my little cousin this summer at the young age of 16. He grew up and lived in Wausau, WI. He wasn't just my little cousin, he was one of my little brothers. Whenever I talked about him I would say, "my brother." He grew up with me and my siblings—sleepovers, family trips to the Milwaukee Zoo and WI Dells, going to summer fairs together, doing homework with us—you name a family activity, he was there.

When I got the call on the morning of July 8th this summer that he jumped off a parking garage and killed himself, I was screaming and then couldn't even breathe. I sat on my floor shaking and cried for a couple hours—couldn't even move. I have never felt so much pain in my life. I've only lost my grandpas at this point in my life—so all I can say to describe the pain is take the pain of losing someone who is supposed to pass away from old age and multiply that by a million—and it's still not enough to describe it.

He was 12 years younger than me—I was 28 and him 16 when we lost him—and all I could think was why? Life changes drastically from high school to college to adulthood. What could have been going on?

I'll never know why, because he didn't leave a note. I'll never get to talk to him ever again. He will never experience the joy of starting his senior year of high school, he'll never pick out a college, he'll never get to experience finding his footing in life and pick a career like the rest of us, he won't find love for the first time, experience new places he never dreamt that he'd get to see, and the list goes on and on.

My little brother missed out on so much life, and that hurts my heart to know that he felt that alone to not see what life had in store. It tears my heart apart knowing he didn't feel like he could come to any of his family or friends and ask for help.

At his funeral my family met about 50 of his friends, all of us there grieving so much pain, and it crossed my mind—he had so many people who loved him—why didn't he just ask one of us to talk?

And this is where it gets tricky. Not everyone reaches out to family when they need help, they don't turn to teachers, and they don't turn to friends like we think that they would. So where do they turn to?

The Center of Disease Control .gov website right now states Wisconsin's suicide rates are up 19-30%, and that suicide is the leading cause of death in the US. They also disclose that in 2016, 45,000 deaths in the US were from suicide.

What do we do? How can we make an impact by starting with just our state?

California just passed a law that requires grades 7 to 12 to have helplines on the back of their school IDs. This is for suicide, bullying, someone to just talk to.

I grew up in Antigo, WI and have gone through the Wisconsin school system from Pre-K to attending the University of Wisconsin—Madison, and I continued to live in Madison 3 years post-graduation working in the Madison community. In all my life while living in WI and going through the education system, I was never taught about mental health or where to go if I was feeling alone—even at UW-Madison to be honest. Looking back on it, it was figure it out on your own. I have had classes on physical health, sexual

health, driving lessons, and of course DARE to resist drugs and alcohol. But not once mental health and simply where to go to if I'm feeling alone to have a safe place to talk.

Why don't we have a locked in resource for our kids for this? Especially in today's world? We can't control technology, can't control what kids see on their own, what they see from friends, tv, and the internet. Being a kid today in middle school and high school is completely different from when any of us grew up. I don't know about you, but smartphones definitely were not a thing when I was in high school.

There are so many factors stimulating and forming the thoughts of children today that we can't even comprehend. In a world of being so connected via social media, kids are still so alone. People create an image too look like they are doing something popular but really were alone creating that image. Kids are living in a way that has never been seen or experienced by anyone on this planet.

So what can we do?

We have already established kids don't always turn to teachers, guidance counselors, family, and friends. We definitely can't change all technology laws overnight, we can't make kids talk to us—we all know those adolescent years, and we can't control what kids do—we all know that will never go over well. What we can do is give them resources to help navigate their thoughts and feelings. A resource we know can be a safe space. Let's give them hotlines on the back of their school ids.

School ids are used for everything. Checking out books, lunch, buying parking passes, tickets to dances, getting into football games—way too many to list. Having those resources on their IDs and children seeing them every day to naturally think this is a resource for me is one thing we can make happen and help save lives.

Having grown up in the Wisconsin school system—Langlade County—I have seen firsthand shortage on school budget. This would also be a simple solution that is frugal. Schools already have the budget for IDs. I don't see why another family or school of kids has to see a person they love die before their time.

Suicide doesn't discriminate against political party, ethnicity, age, or gender. And when it happens, everyone feels a pain and have a hole in their heart that will never really be filled again. All we can do is try to provide help to as many people as we can. Who's not to say a parent won't see the info on their child's ID and use it themselves? The potential ripple effect we can have from this is huge.

California may have been one for the first states to implement a law to save lives, but I don't want Wisconsin to be one of the last. I don't want any other family to feel the pain my whole family and my brother's friends have felt. I want to prevent people from carrying the same pain I will carry the rest of my life. I don't want another family having thoughts on their mind 24/7 on what else they could have done or wonder how the life of their loved would have turned out.

I do believe if my brother was taught throughout his schooling about the hotlines, it was provided to him, and how they could help - he would have used it.

We truly have the potential to save lives and save thousands of Wisconsites an indescribable pain. Let's make it happen, and put lifesaving resources on our kids' school ids.

Janki Patel – electronic signature

October 21, 2019

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter in support of legislation to pass a law that would make it mandatory to include Suicide prevention hotline numbers on the back of every public and private school ID of all students in WI.

Suicide prevention is something I never would have dreamed I would be talking about at this point in my life. I always felt it did not involve me or anyone I knew. Sadly, I can now say my thought process has taken a sudden change since this past July and it now it is real.

One beautiful, carefree summer morning I received a telephone call from my son's girlfriend, Janki, who lives close to him in Arizona. She grew up in Antigo, WI. She was crying so hard, that at first that I thought something happened to my son. She explained to me that her 16 year old cousin, Jay, had passed away from suicide during the night. Janki, is a very strong young lady and to listen to her cry and the heart ache in her voice from losing her dear cousin she practically considered her little brother was extremely gut wrenching. She had so many questions, what ifs and thoughts that will never be answered.

Being a mother to 2 grown adult children and a 17 year old at home and an RN who has worked with children my entire nursing career, I felt I was not much help with answering these questions and I knew that really no one can, no matter your qualifications.

I never would have thought that I would be meeting Janki's family for the first time at a funeral, let alone a funeral for a child. No one truly will ever know what was going on in Jay's mind. Teenagers have such fragile, immature, compulsive, hormonal, out of control, easily influenced, in the moment emotions. Sadly, they many times can put on a great game face to hide behind and cover up what's going on in their minds and hearts. Was Jay lonely, feeling isolated, bullied, confused....??

If Jay had an opportunity to simply turn over his school ID and see a suicide or perhaps a general need for guidance hotline that he could have texted or called, would we be writing and insisting that Wisconsin make it a law that every school ID carry these important numbers on the back?? What if Jay has someone he could reach out to and be told that his life mattered, that someone cared for him and could help him? What if Jay just needed to hear he was loved and perhaps what he imagined was so wrong with his life might have been exaggerated and could be worked out? What if Jay knew what a domino effect his death has made on some many and those left to grieve and wonder why? Having something as simple as providing hotline numbers on the back of school IDs for every student in WI is only the beginning, but an extremely important beginning in itself!

Other than the innocent childhood photos I have seen and the stories I have heard from Janki and his family, my first and last vision of Jay was him lying in a casket. That vision will never leave my memory. That vision of a teenager dying from suicide is not normal. It makes me listen, appreciate, cherish and hold onto my 17 year old just a little longer since July.

If anything positive comes from Jay's passing, please let it be this legislation and may it save at least one more life, one loved one, one child, one grandchild, one sibling, one niece or nephew, one cousin....one friend.

Thank you very much for your time and careful consideration of turning this into reality and a law!

May God bless you all!
Sincerely,
Debbie Westenberg
2655 Delcore Road
Oconto, WI 54153
920-373-1241

To whom it may concern:

My name is Dan Murphy and I am a lifelong Wisconsin resident. I am writing to express my support of the initiative to have suicide help line information provided on the back of all high school student identification cards across the State of Wisconsin.

I understand that the matter is up for legislation in Wisconsin, where the CDC reports suicide rates have increased by 19-30%. I realize that there is no easy or inexpensive solution to address the rising rates of suicide. However, there is an easy solution to give the teenagers of our state another opportunity, another chance at life, before making that fatal mistake – this is it!

As someone who has been personally affected by suicide, suicide attempts, and suicidal thoughts of friends and family, as well as witnessed the fallout of that impact on people close to me, I can attest it is not something that is easy to talk about. For those close to me that considered or tried taking their own lives, that were lucky enough and willing to talk about it, the common underlying theme was that they felt they didn't have anyone to turn to or talk about it with – it is often hard for them to speak to people they are close with, about it.

Passing this legislation will not solve the root cause. However, it will help educate those in need of another option, and hopefully progress this much needed conversation across many families, communities, and schools in the state of Wisconsin. Please strongly consider passing this legislation.

Thank you,
Dan Murphy

My name is Zach Westenberg, and I am writing in support of the legislation to provide help hotlines on the back of student IDs in Wisconsin. I was born and raised in WI, went through the Wisconsin school system and attended UW-Oshkosh. My whole family lives in the Oconto, WI area, and I currently have a teenage sister in the school system. Robin Patrick will be reading my statement on my behalf since I can't attend this meeting in person.

To whom it may concern,

Do you think we as adults can help stop the rise of teen suicide?

Yes- I feel as adults we can. I am writing today as a call to action for the Wisconsin State Legislation to pass a law for schools to have hotlines on all student IDs.

The ones hurt most by suicide are the ones left behind. This topic recently became very real for me. In July, after enjoying a long weekend of hiking out of state with my girlfriend, I received a phone call from her. She was an emotional puddle, but she was able to muscle up the strength to tell me she received news her 16 year old cousin had become a victim to suicide the night before. It was exceptionally difficult given the relationship she had with him- she considered him her brother.

I have never been this close to a suicide so I had no experience on how to navigate the grieving process. This situation made me feel the most helpless and most lost I have ever felt.... I can't imagine how helpless and lost the victims must feel?

My girlfriend and I both grew up and were raised in Wisconsin. We currently reside outside of Wisconsin in a state where we have no family. She found a support group for those left behind after suicide. I went with her to be the best support I could be. Of the 7 groups that shared their stories, 4 of them were about young people: 12-20 years old. Four young people that ended their lives prematurely. In the room, there was a common theme: questions and so much pain.

As I was growing up and going through the Wisconsin school system, I never had suicidal thoughts, was a victim of bullying or felt like I was alone. But if I'm being honest, looking back at it, if I ever would have had suicidal thoughts I know exactly where I would NOT go for help: anyone that I knew - friends, family, teachers, and coaches. I would have been too proud or embarrassed of myself to let someone I knew know about my personal battle or "weakness."

I want you to think about that- I know where I would have NOT gone - not where I COULD have gone for help.

Putting the hotline on an everyday accessible and visible spot may seem insignificant, but if it could help just one young child with their struggle... that would be significant. A quick glance at the back of the card while walking down the hallway between classes, standing by lockers, or when kids are walking to the bus - that could be all it takes to help save a life.

If we as adults can help lessen the teen suicide rate and pain felt by those left behind by simply printing a number on a card- what do we have to lose? Hopefully not another young life.

The ones hurt most by suicide are the ones left behind.

Thank you,
Zach Westenberg - electronic signature
(602)228-9863

To whomever it concerns,

It has come to our attention that legislation is being reviewed which would require all student IDs in Wisconsin to provide information for a suicide hotline. As people who have struggled or have had family who struggled in the past with depression and suicidal thoughts, we fully support this legislation. Middle school and high school are both very hard transition periods in life for any child—much more, children who struggle with anxiety, depression, or other mental illness.

Oftentimes, families are not equipped to properly deal with these issues within their children. And many times, they may not see the warning signs. No child should ever feel so alone that they turn to suicide. It is literally the least we can do to make sure that all students and children—who may not feel open enough to discuss their feelings and emotions with family, friends, or teachers—have information in their backpacks, purses, or wallets regarding anonymous helplines.

Having this resource in plain sight and within reach could potentially help engrave into the minds of adolescents that there is at least one other solution to life's problems beside suicide—that there is an anonymous shoulder to cry on and an outside source who can give advice and resources without judgment or bias.

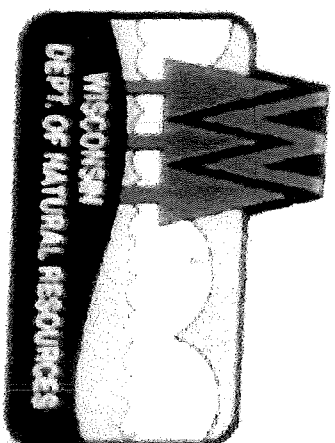
We are all humans, we all struggle—it is part of the condition of life. It is time to take away the stigma, leave the information out to be seen, and open up the opportunity for a conversation that could potentially save many young lives. Suicide is such a permanent solution to very temporary problems. Our children in Wisconsin deserve to know and understand that there is help.

Again, printing a hotline number on a school ID is the least we can do for our kids. It's time to lift them up and do whatever we can to eradicate suicide in children and young adults.

Thank you,

Tyler Luebke and Jose Vera—WI residents.

Governmental Administrative



WI Dept. of Natural Resources

Issue Date 10/16/2018

Expiration 10/16/2025

**PATRICK
KEITH**

Rank/Title

FTE

WISCONSIN

Emergency Information: WEM 800-943-0003

Tax Exempt #: ES40690

Send to:
State Capitol Police
17 W Main St. #301
Madison, WI 53703

WIS550WDNR02410

© **HID** 0009P

108905 11101961047-1

Mausau Fire Department



Issued: 9/27/2019

**Expires:
Battalion Chief**

**Kraig L.
Krizan**

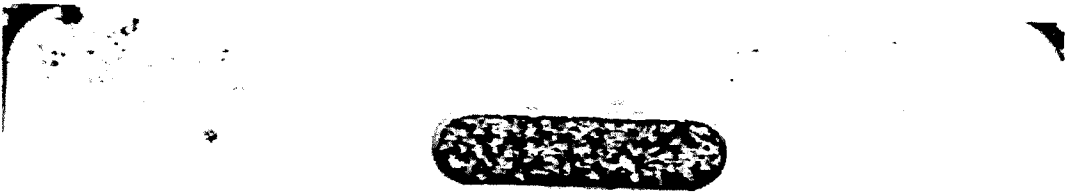


Wisco

From: Kraig kruzer82@gmail.com
Subject: Id
Date: October 21, 2019 at 5:57 PM
To: robinp@thinkmoxie.com



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*This credential is property of the agency listed
on the front of the card. Please return to:*

**Wausau Fire Department
606 E. Thomas St.
Wausau, WI 54403**

**ICS200, EMT-P, FADOA, FADOP,
FINSTI, FOI, HAZT**
