

Dear Appropriations Committee,

My name is Celeste Stewart and I am a BSW student at Southern Connecticut State University.

As a social work student, I continuously push for change and educate individuals on current social issues our society is facing. A social issue that is apparent is the suicide rates in our country. With that being said, I strongly support S.B. No. 130 which is an act concerning funding for suicide prevention organizations.

In 2018 there were an estimated 1,400,000 attempts of suicide. In 2018 there were 48,344 deaths by suicide. These numbers only include the deaths and attempts that were reported. Suicide has been the tenth leading cause of death in our country for years. Although it isn't continuing to rise, it also means that we aren't making change. There are approximately 132 deaths by suicide a day. That 132 people that could have benefited from the services of a suicide prevention organizations.

In high school, we weren't exposed to many mental health services other than the faculty at school. My school never talked about suicide until it was too late. In my four years of high school we lost three students to suicide. That is three too many. Students were left heartbroken and confused. We know the outcome of not having access or knowledge about suicide prevention organizations, but what would the outcome have been if there was more access to suicide prevention organizations? I urge you to take a minute and think about this. Recognize that this increase in funding can save lives. I hope you see the urgency with this social issue and pass S.B. No. 130. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.