

March 28, 2021

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Issue: Raised S.B. 1085 AN ACT CONCERNING SUICIDE PREVENTION. To establish the Connecticut Suicide Advisory Board in statute and require continuing medical education regarding suicide prevention.

Introduced by the Public Health Committee Analysis: Though the spirit of this bill is to support a state suicide advisory board, it is not supporting the continuance of the “CT Suicide Advisory Board.”

Consequence: This bill will dissolve the CT Suicide Advisory Board as it exist today.

The Connecticut Suicide Advisory Board (CTSAB) was established January 2012 through the merger of the 1989 legislatively-mandated CT Youth Suicide Advisory Board under the CT Department of Children and Families, and the CT Department of Public Health’s Interagency Suicide Prevention Network to create one state-level Suicide Advisory Board to address suicide across the lifespan.

The current CTSAB is tri-chaired by the CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Department of Children and Families, and CT Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and is the single state-level advisory board in Connecticut that addresses suicide prevention, intervention and response across the lifespan. Through this collaboration, the CTSAB follows evidence based practices to through committees:

- Zero Suicide Learning Community for Health & Behavioral Health Care Systems:
- Lethal Means: Data To Action
- Intervention-Postvention Response
- Attempt Survivors/Lived Experience Committee

The Connecticut Suicide Advisory Board is nationally recognized but the current legislation threatens to dissolve the CTSAB. Now, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic is NOT the time to dissolve and reorganize.

S.B. 1085 would breakdown and eliminate the collaboration between the CTSAB, State and National suicide prevention and mental health organizations, and existing relationships with state and local officials. Additionally, S.B.1085 for suicide prevention is more youth focused when in fact, according to the CDC, we lose more middle aged persons to suicide than youth.

Finally, I would like to add my personal story. I lost my 19yr.old son, Brian to suicide in 2011. As you can imagine, my world was shattered. Brian’s suicide came was a shock. A few years after Brian’s loss, I found my way to the CTSAB. As a survivor of suicide loss, not only did they welcome me, they listened to my needs as a survivor, and how my story could help others.

Although I was among the most highly qualified experts on mental health in the state, they treated me as an equal, with compassion and respect.

In my opinion, this is what makes the CTSAB a success. There is no hierarchy, no one agency has power over another. Non-profits, state agencies, hospitals, and more- working together to reduce the stigma, educate, and save lives. This proposed new entity will destroy years of work and dedication. Please, I ask that you do not pass S.B. 1085.

Regards-

Ann Irr Dagle