

Testimony against S.B. 1085

Good morning Chairman Abrams, Chairman Steinberg, Ranking Members Hwang, Somers and Petit as well as distinguished members of the Public Health Committee.

My name is John Kleinhans and I serve on the Board of Directors for the Brian Dagle Foundation. The Brian Dagle Foundation's mission is anchored in hope and empowered to support. Our mission is dedicated to the healing of grieving adults as well as community education on suicide prevention and awareness.

I would like to testify against section 1 of raised bill S.B. 1085, an act concerning suicide prevention. Though the spirit of this bill is to support a statewide suicide advisory board, it will dissolve the CT suicide advisory board as it exists today. The proposed changes to CT SAB will result in loss to many of the advances the organization has made over the last several years. This is not the time to dissolve and reorganize the Connecticut Suicide Advisory Board. Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, it is now time to expand the existing infrastructure. There are many pieces of this legislation that do not make sense for success but in particular, the legislation does not recognize the unique needs of children and youth and removes all reference to youth.

This new board would also exclude organizations such as the Brian Dagle Foundation and the Connecticut Chapter of the AFSP from being involved. These organizations play a vital role in the success of the statewide suicide advisory board. The current board has been nationally recognized, and it does not make sense to dissolve it and institute a new board.

This bill is the wrong path forward, and I hope the committee will not support this legislation. Now more than ever, we should keep the current Connecticut suicide advisory intact. Thank you for allowing me to testify.