

March 27, 2021

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From: Thomas J Steen, Suicide Prevention Master Trainer  
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention CT  
Co-Chair, CT Suicide Advisory Board

Re: HB 1085, AN ACT CONCERNING SUICIDE PREVENTION.

Though the spirit of this bill is to support a state suicide advisory board, it doesn't not recognize the "CT Suicide Advisory Board". This bill, as written, will eliminates this body to form another. Additionally, this bill doesn't include a role for CT Foundations and more importantly, doesn't include loss survivors to suicide or those with lived experience. How can you have a Statewide Suicide Prevention body and not include them?

Should this bill pass, it would be tremendously disruptive to the statewide suicide prevention infrastructure that CT Suicide Advisory Board (CTSAB) has spent over 10 years developing based on national evidence-based guidance with national technical assistance, training, and support from federal grants. Connecticut is now nationally recognized due to CTSAB efforts. Now, especially during COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on mental health and suicide ideation, legislation should reinforce and expand the existing infrastructure, not break it down to reinvent without understanding the existing infrastructure and work of the CTSAB has accomplished despite the lack of dedicated funding from the state.

**I strongly recommend that you reject S.B. 1085 as written.**

Respectfully submitted,  
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