



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 24, 2017

Suicide prevention and awareness bill passes state legislature unanimously

INDIANAPOLIS – A bill calling for a state suicide prevention coordinator and for suicide prevention training for school employees in Indiana is on its way to Gov. Eric Holcomb to be signed into law.

House Bill 1430 requires youth suicide prevention training for Hoosier teachers and certain school employees every three years after June 30, 2018. The bill also creates the position of a statewide suicide prevention coordinator. The bill passed the state legislature unanimously on April 17.

Mindi Goodpaster, the public policy and advocacy director for the Marion County Commission on Youth, Inc. (MCCOY), helped research best practices for the development of the bill. In her testimony during a Senate education committee meeting earlier this year, Goodpaster said that the law will help teachers know how to react appropriately if students tell them they or their peers are experiencing suicidal thoughts.

“Your response is critical, and if you don’t know how to handle it appropriately, you could make the situation potentially worse,” Goodpaster said. “And what do you do if a student or staff member in your school dies by suicide? How do you handle that and how do you handle the grief that is experienced by the students in that school? Your response as a school could be critical to preventing more suicides.”

HB 1430, authored by Representative Julie Olthoff (R-Merrillville), and Senate Bill 506, authored by Senator Randy Head (R-Logansport), are companion bills that were created as responses to the increasing number of youth suicides in the state. The bills are supported by almost two years’ worth of research and study into best practices and other states’ laws by a large group of stakeholders from across Indiana.

Rep. Olthoff authored HB 1430 after hearing about several youth suicides over the past year in Indiana’s northern counties.

“My hope with this bill is to prevent suicides by raising awareness,” said Olthoff. “It breaks my heart to hear stories about people losing hope and giving up, especially young people. A statewide coordinator will be the key to disseminating resources to parents, schools, counselors, first responders and the medical community. It will take all of us working together to say suicide



is not the answer.”

Sen. Head originally authored SB 506, which was amended into HB 1430 during the legislative process.

“We simply are not doing enough to prevent young people from dying by suicide,” said Head. “This law offers a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to preventing suicide in Indiana through all stages of life, and I am extremely grateful to all of the stakeholders who provided input into the creation of this important legislation.”

Details of the law can be found on [this handout](#). To learn more about this bill, click [here](#). To learn more about MCCOY’s advocacy efforts, click [here](#).

The Marion County Commission on Youth, Inc. (MCCOY) is the youth services intermediary for central Indiana whose mission is to champion the positive development of youth through leadership on key issues and support of the youth worker community. MCCOY’s vision is that every young person in central Indiana has opportunities to thrive, learn, engage and contribute.

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