

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 99-4648, by Representatives Wood, Cooper, DeBolt, Gombosky, Benson, Tokuda, Conway and Sullivan

WHEREAS, Suicide is the eighth leading cause of death in Washington and the second-listed cause of death for those between ages fifteen and thirty-four, claiming seven hundred eighty-five lives in Washington in 1996, as reported by Washington State Vital Statistics (1996) and the Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics (1997); and

WHEREAS, The Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behaviors (1988-1992) indicates that one Washington youth in ten attempts suicide and one in five seriously contemplates suicide; and

WHEREAS, The suicide completion rate, according to the Center for Health Statistics, has increased in the fifteen to thirty-five age group by four hundred thirty-five percent from 1960 to 1996, while total deaths increased only one hundred fifty-four percent; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Health's Youth Suicide reported that, among youth, nonfatal suicide attempts outnumber suicide deaths by approximately seven to one, and according to *An Assessment of Suicide in Washington State* (June 1994), nonfatal suicide attempts often result in significant medical and economic costs, and in physical, emotional, and psychological damages, and acute care hospital treatment of nonfatal suicide patients from 1990 through 1992 totaled forty-three million dollars, not including physician's fees; and

WHEREAS, The stigma associated with mental illness hinders suicide prevention by keeping persons at risk from seeking assistance, and the stigma associated with completed suicides may prevent family members from regaining meaningful lives; and

WHEREAS, Suicide is a complex and multifaceted biological, sociological, psychological, and societal problem, and deaths from suicide impose massive economic burdens on the state through lost potential, lost work time by those affected, and medical costs; and

WHEREAS, Suicide is preventable, and prevention opportunities are increasing through advanced clinical research, preventive treatments, and neuroscience, all of which need assistance in overcoming the myths, stigmas, and taboos that have created a silence in our state that may adversely affect suicide prevention education; and

WHEREAS, The State of Washington has a nationally renowned suicide prevention program that needs the participation and the resolve of the people;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize suicide as a state problem, declare suicide prevention a priority, and acknowledge that no single program or effort will be appropriate for all communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Co-Chief Clerks of the House of Representatives to the Director of the Washington State Department of Health and to the manager of the Washington State Youth Suicide Prevention Program.

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