

Stop Pharmaceutical Companies from Usurping Parental Rights and Abusing Children!

Vote AGAINST HB 1386

Suicide prevention should not be conducted at the expense of parental rights and **parents should decide** if they want their children screened for suicide or any other mental health condition. This bill goes too far in its efforts to push supposed suicide prevention in schools **without the knowledge or consent of parents**. It also amazingly escapes a fiscal note by allowing for donations, gifts, and grants that may come from conflict-of-interest-ridden pharmaceutical companies that push drugs for suicide prevention rather than talk therapy or other treatments. Don't forget depression medications are NOT tested on children and have BLACK BOX WARNINGS because they increase suicidal ideations in children and teens.

HB 1386 PRETENDS to leave decisions in the hands of parents, yet it is full of overbearing, suggestive language that basically tells parents what they WILL do – it is only missing the stern “or else” warning to get its point across that decisions won't really be left up to parents after all (i.e. a phone call to Child Protective Services alleging medical neglect).

Is the decision-making for the “best interest of the child” *really* being left up to the parent or pre-decided by school officials who suddenly become mental health screeners??? Look at the domineering, dictatorial tone of the language toward parents in this bill. Will these parental notifications be followed up with a CPS call if a parent decides to take different action deemed *inappropriate* by school officials turned into mental health personnel?

Language being dictated to parents about their children:

1. Notice and referral to a parent so **appropriate action**, such as **mental health services**, may be taken by a parent
2. Procedure for providing notice of a **necessity for early mental health intervention**
3. Notice of a student who is **identified as at risk** of suicide to parent
4. Establishes the **actions to take** to obtain assistance, intervention, and notice to a parent or guardian in response to the **necessity for intervention**
5. Sets out the **available optional counseling alternatives (PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION)** for a parent or guardian to consider when their child is identified as possibly being in **need of early mental health intervention** or suicide prevention
6. Notice of the **need for mental health intervention** so parent may take **appropriate action**

Under the guise of suicide prevention, HB 1386 opens the door for pharmaceutical control of families (via drug companies funding programs that recommend their drugs as treatment). The bill also states that there is no INTENTION to interfere with parental rights in decision-making about children, but there are no guarantees that parental rights will not be usurped when a parent decides on a different course of action for their child that school officials or mental health professionals disagree with, **nor is there a remedy when parental rights are violated in the process of suicide prevention screening and programs**. Laws should protect against interference with parental rights, not just hope that the original intention is carried out.

It is one thing to raise awareness of suicide as an issue and train people on the warning signs, but it is quite another to push certain programs, interventions, and actions that children will be subjected to **without parental consent**.

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Parent Guidance Center

Help a parent and you've already helped a child

Senate Education Committee
Communications Director
May 19, 2011 Re: HB 1386

Written Testimony of Judy Powell
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Parental Rights Pillaged in the Name of Suicide Prevention

The truth is I shouldn't be here today. You should be looking at something similar to the Jason Flatt Act passed in several states now that requires 2 hours of suicide prevention training for teachers and other school officials as part of their in-service hours – that's it! We should not be here discussing parental rights and early mental health intervention without parental consent in our schools under the guise of suicide prevention!

Once a child has attempted suicide we are no longer in the PREVENTION stage and the child should have obviously been identified for treatment. In order to actually **prevent** a suicide, however, we don't even need to discuss mental health INTERVENTION because at that point prevention has already failed.

TRUE suicide prevention should involve learning about the risk factors and warning signs for suicide so teachers can recognize and identify children that might need help. It's that simple. For instance, if a child's parents are going through a divorce or if they have lost a loved one or had a break-up, they are NOT mentally ill if they become a little depressed at the situation – that's normal! True suicide prevention programs, such as those offered by the Jason Foundation, the organization behind the Flatt Act, actually involve talking to teens themselves about what's normal in life and their feelings about situations and offer coping skills. These programs help teens and train teachers without all this overbearing, bullying mental health speak to parents.

DON'T BE FOOLED! This bill is not really about suicide prevention at all – it is about mental health screening in our schools. I shudder to think what will happen in schools with high rates of minorities or language-barriered parents if this bill passes as is (we have offered amendment suggestions to the committee) because we already know that CPS, juvenile, and mental health systems have high rates of disproportionality!

You can't put the cart before the horse either – **you can't say you're going to notify a parent of the NEED or NECESSITY for mental health INTERVENTION unless you have already screened my kid without my permission!** That's a fact! Now if you have recognized a symptom or warning sign, then by all means the school has a duty to call the parent and possibly refer them to further consult with the school counselor – and then it's the parents' choice how they will respond. When we get into terms like APPROPRIATE ACTION and NECESSITY for mental health intervention, then we are chipping away at parental rights. How are we going to determine the "appropriate action" for any given situation or individual? And if a school or mental health provider disagrees with a parent's choice of action . . .the school could likely call CPS and accuse parents of medical and/or educational neglect.

This bill is about getting mental health screening into our schools - something pharmaceutical companies push for heavily! One need only go to a few suicide "prevention" sites to find out the truth behind **early mental health intervention vs. true prevention programs** in regards to suicide. The fact is pharmaceutical companies who will most likely be solicited for donations, gifts, and grants because of our current budget crisis. Pharmaceutical companies win every time our kids are labeled with depression and medicated. These labels will follow children around the rest of their lives.

Don't take my word for it, look at who is funding most of the programs by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (afsp.org). This is listed plainly on their website!

Interactive Screening Program (ISP):*The ISP started with funding from Eli Lilly and Co., Janssen Pharmaceutica Inc., Solvay Pharmaceuticals Inc. and Wyeth Pharmaceuticals. Recent donations have been provided by the Out of the Darkness walks, the Raynier Institute & Foundation, the Johnny Foundation and the Kristin Rita Strouse Foundation.*

Suicide Data Bank:*The Suicide Data Bank project was supported by grants from the Mental Illness Foundation and Janssen Pharmaceutica Inc.*

International Project on Suicide Prevention Strategies:*The project is supported by a grant from Pfizer Inc.*

LGBT Initiative:*The 2007 conference on LGBT suicide and suicide risk was sponsored by AFSP, the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association, the Suicide Prevention Resource Center and Eli Lilly and Company Foundation. The LGBT Initiative is currently being funded by a grant from the Johnson Family Foundation.*

Hungarian Suicide Prevention Project:*The Hungarian project was funded by the Open Society Institute and by Janssen Pharmaceutica Inc. through a grant from the King Badouin Foundation United States.*

Please vote AGAINST HB 1386 and keep parental rights safe.

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