

January 27, 2026

Dear Members of The Education Committee and The State House,

I am writing to express my strong support for the bill proposal, #H7026, introduced by Representative Earl Read to include the telephone number for a state or national suicide prevention hotline; and the telephobe number for a state or national substance abuse crisis center on the back of both student and staff identification cards.

Mental health crises can affect anyone—students, educators, and school staff. In moments of depression, anxiety, or emotional distress, immediate access to help can be life-saving. Printing or affixing a sticker of both numbers for mental health and substance use support on ID cards is a simple, low-cost, and effective step to ensure that help is always within reach for every member of a school community.

Numbers like the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline provides free, confidential, 24/7 access to trained mental health professionals through call, text, or chat in regards to mental health and substance use support. By placing something like this resource on ID cards (items carried daily),we reduce barriers to care, increase awareness, and reinforce that seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Including support numbers on both student and staff ID cards also acknowledges the critical role adults play in school communities and recognizes that educators and staff face significant stress and mental health challenges as well. This bill will promote prevention and positive well being for all.

I respectfully urge you to support this initiative and take this meaningful step to protect lives and promote mental health and substance use awareness.

Thank you for your time and the commitment to the well-being of our students and staff.

Sincerely,

Lauren Cone, LCSW, CSAC

Student Assistance Counselor at Coventry High School