

Lisa Cataldi

From: Vanessa Gould <vanessa.lynn0330@gmail.com>
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To: House Education Committee



Chair and committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to you in support of H 5353 The Nathan Bruno and Jason Flatt Act. A suicide prevention bill that was sculpted by high school youth in the Every Student Initiative (a program of Be Great For Nate) and the board of directors for BG4N.

This legislation was first introduced in 2019, a year after the tragic suicide of fifteen year old Nathan Bruno. Nathan's peers strongly felt action needed to be taken to prevent other youth from dying by suicide. It was during research of current laws that Be Great For Nate came across the Jason Flatt Act, a suicide prevention law that has been enacted in 20 other states so far.

The Nathan Bruno and Jason Flatt Act does the following:

- Provide suicide prevention training every year for public school personnel. This will include;
 - Administration
 - Teachers
 - Custodians
 - Contracted workers
 - Athletic coaches (including volunteers)
 - And more
- Provide suicide prevention training every year for public school students grades 6-12
- Require the Department of Education to create a model policy for schools to follow on suicide prevention, intervention and postvention. Which will include;
 - Parental notification guidelines
 - Clarification on who in student support services is there to assist in social emotional issues and how to contact them, for parents and students.
 - Language defining an in-school issue versus and out-of-school issue

In 2018 Nathan Bruno was one on nine youth to die by suicide in the state of Rhode Island, that is nine too many. The most recent CDC data shows that 3,041 high school aged youth attempt suicide every single day. This is a problem we can fix and a problem we must fix. The Nathan Bruno and Jason Flatt Act will save lives. We can't wait anymore. It is time for action.

Thank you for your consideration
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