



SPEAKER'S TASK FORCE ON **Suicide Prevention**

Representative Joan Ballweg, Chair • Representative Steve Doyle, Vice Chair

The Honorable Alberta Darling, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Finance
317 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

The Honorable John Nygren, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Finance
309 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

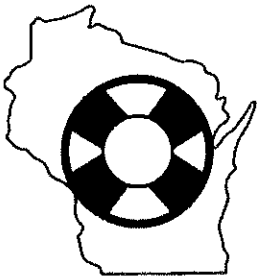
Dear Senator Darling and Representative Nygren:

Earlier today, we released the interim report of the Assembly Speaker's Task Force on Suicide Prevention. Included in that report is a recommendation for action by the Joint Committee on Finance regarding a grant for the text-based or application-based suicide prevention program.

Individuals who are in crisis may seek immediate assistance by texting the Crisis Text Line, which provides free access to a trained crisis counselor from anywhere within the United States 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In Wisconsin, this text-based service is called HOPELINE and is supported by the Center for Suicide Awareness, which pays a licensing fee to the Crisis Text Line. Via that partnership, the Center for Suicide Awareness is able to market the Crisis Text Line number, 741741, and to obtain a wide range of data and statistics regarding Wisconsin's use of the service. Currently, the state does not contribute funding to support this text-based service.

The task force was given the chance to share our gained knowledge with colleagues by making recommendations on pieces of the most recent budget. Our recommendations regarding this grant is a departure from the budget. Through the work of our task force, we learned the original grantors, the Department of Public Instruction, did not believe their appropriation was the appropriate place for this grant. We also learned about the importance of data, the quality of data and data sharing.

It is the recommendation of the task force that the Joint Committee on Finance approve a motion that requires DHS to award a grant to a nonprofit organization to support staff, training, and expenses related to operating a text-based or application-based suicide prevention program and that appropriates \$110,000 annually for that purpose. The task force also recommends that receipt of the grant be conditioned on compliance with certain reporting requirements. Specifically, the grant recipient must annually submit a report to DHS describing the expenditures of the grant funds and containing aggregated data relating to the use of the textbased or application-based suicide prevention program that ensures the anonymity of



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individuals who contact the program, including data collected by the recipient and all data provided to the recipient by third-party organizations and by individuals who contact the program. In turn, DHS must then annually report to the Legislature about the suicide prevention activities in the state, including the information received from the grant recipient regarding the text-based or application-based suicide prevention program.

As Chair and Vice-Chair of the task force, we appreciate your consideration of our recommendation.

Regards,

Joan Ballweg
State Representative
41st Assembly District

Steve Doyle
State Representative
94th Assembly District