



recognizing depression • preventing suicide

**Ohio Senate Education Committee
Proponent Written Testimony HB 123 SAVE Students
October 29, 2019**

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Jack Binder

Dear Chairwoman Lehner, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Minority Member Fedor and Senate Education Committee Members:

On behalf of LifeAct, I am writing in support of HB 123 to provide suicide prevention training and awareness among students and teachers in Ohio's schools. As you may be aware, after accidents, suicide will take more lives than any other cause of death for Americans under the age of 35 - 2x's that of homicide! The rate of suicide for some of the youngest and most vulnerable members of our State is skyrocketing. 15% of 9th grade females have reported making a suicide attempt. This was 10% just 10 years ago. The rate of suicide for young African-American males has almost doubled in that same period.

For more than 25 years LifeAct has been serving Ohio with depression awareness and suicide prevention education and referral programs. LifeAct believes that to effect real change at a local level you need to design and deliver programs that are locally sensitive to socioeconomic and demographic differences. This is the LifeAct difference. We have been delivering culturally sensitive and relevant programming, in-person, directly to Ohio students. While "training-the-trainer" may be of value in assisting teens and adolescents by educating adults, teens have access to far more information, about themselves and their friends, in real-time.

Through our in-class programming, delivered in-person by our trained instructors, we have educated more than **250,000 students** about the signs of depression and the early-warning signs of suicide. More importantly, our team of instructors have assisted more than **15,000 Ohio** teens and adolescents who came forward seeking help as an outcome of our programming.

We know firsthand the growing need for suicide prevention and safety training in Ohio's schools today and urge your support for HB 123. Thank you for your support and commitment to the prevention of suicide among Ohio's youth.

Sincerely,

Jack Binder
CEO, LifeAct

2016 recipient, Ohio Nonprofit Excellence Award



2016 recipient, Teen Mental Health Award

