

Good Morning- My name is Lindsay Tayfel and I am a 7th grade student at Brecksville Broadview Hts Middle School. I am here in support of Senate Bill 121.

Did you know that suicide is now the leading cause of death for Ohio youth ages 10-14 and that one child dies of suicide every 33 hours? Suicide is also the second leading cause of death in Ohio youth ages 15-24. (Ohio

Department of Health Report for years 2007-2018) I'm sure that every one of you can think back and recall your middle school days as being stressful in some ways, and may even be inclined to be dismissive of teens talking about the stressors that they face on a daily basis.

However, there are added stressors that are new to my

generation of children. We are the first generation to practice drills for what to do in the case of gunmen coming into our schools. We are the first generation to be able to buy bullet-proof backpacks. Rapid growth in technology has led to an explosion of social media. Bullying is at an all time high and social media has made it impossible to get away from bullying, even in the safety of your own home. Greater emphasis is placed on excelling in sports from a young age and there is earlier concern over maintaining a GPA that is at or even above 4.0. For these reasons, Governor DeWine created a \$675 million fund for Ohio's students called the Student Wellness and Success Fund.

Starting this school year, I was very stressed. I was taking on a lot of new challenges and I wasn't comfortable with myself. Around my age is when clothes and looks start to matter more than personality. I also didn't have much self-esteem. Without health class, I don't know what I would have done. Health class brought stress busters, brain dumps, interpersonal communication skills, and most helpful to me, personal values. With the skills I learned in class, I could find ways to release stress, and boost self confidence, all while placing value on and becoming comfortable with who I am. I believe strongly that every child should be able to get help from their classes; sadly many children in Ohio don't have the chance to do so, if they aren't being taught these skills.

Health class should be a safe zone. We aren't learning about math or reading. We are learning about ourselves. This is just as important as any standardized math lesson that we receive. It was upsetting to learn that Ohio doesn't have a set of health standards to guide teachers. I am fortunate enough to have a school that cares to teach children the full extent of their knowledge. Some students aren't as fortunate. We already know that drugs are bad for us. We also know what foods are nutritious and which ones are questionable. What everyone needs is a program that doesn't just show us what to eat or what stressors are out there. We need a thoughtful program that can truly

help us make good emotional, mental, and physical health choices.

In 2017 the CDC attempted to address climbing suicide rates by publishing recommendations. Those recommendations included the teaching of coping and problem solving skills in schools. Bill 121 would allow teachers to do just that. More importantly, teachers throughout the state would be better able to provide a more comprehensive health education that gets to the root causes of stress and improve student's understanding of how to deal with stress and live a healthier life. Currently, many schools are lacking the essential topics that need to be taught. The passing of Bill 121 will create a more

standardized system for health education and better health standards. Children will learn how to analyze their influences and pinpoint relationships that have a bad effect on them. They can focus on making reasonable goals and good decisions. All children deserve to have this understanding.

Bill 121 must be passed. It is time for a change. Children need to be able to find help, and discover what type of person they should try to be. Teachers need the resources to know what to teach their students so they can guide them. Growing up isn't always easy, but it is a lot harder if you don't know how to properly handle your feelings.

Knowing how to create healthy habits is a skill that will

affect every aspect of your life. The problems that children face on a day to day basis are not going away. How we equip our teachers to help us cope with them needs to change. Passing Bill 121 will do that.

Thank you for your time and consideration.