



Ohio House Children and Human Services Committee

Nancy Eigel-Miller, Executive Director of 1N5

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Chair White, Vice Chair Salvo, Ranking Member Lett, and members of the House Children and Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill (HB) 96. My name is Nancy Eigel-Miller, and I am the executive director of 1N5.

On July 28, 2008, I lost my husband, Jim, to suicide. In the aftermath of that profound loss, my two daughters and I chose to turn our grief into action. We founded 1N5, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing mental health education and suicide prevention across Southwest Ohio. Our name, 1N5, reflects an urgent reality: one in five people live with a mental health condition, and as many as one in three youth experience similar struggles. But mental health is not just about diagnoses; it is essential for everyone, impacting every aspect of our well-being, relationships, and success in life. Today, 1N5 works with over 300 public and private schools in 11 counties, helping more than 240,000 students to provide young people with hope, tools to build resilience, and a stronger sense of connection.

Our partner schools rely on us to help fulfill state laws¹ that require schools instruct students in suicide awareness and prevention, train teachers in youth suicide awareness and prevention, and train athletic coaches in student mental health – all on an ongoing basis. Because educators often feel ill-equipped and lack sufficient time to complete this training, 1N5 helps schools with this responsibility and ensures students receive essential mental health education – all at virtually no cost to the schools. Our partnership is not one and done; we walk alongside educators, parents, and students throughout the year to foster a culture of mental wellness that extends beyond the classroom.

The budget proposal from Governor Mike DeWine continues to prioritize youth mental health and student wellness, and we hope the legislature can support those initiatives, which include:

- providing students in grades K-12 with universal prevention programs that teach students the necessary knowledge and skills to improve health and wellness outcomes;
- creating new guardrails to ensure Student Wellness and Success Funds are used by schools to better support student wellness and craft spending plans with community partners;
- continuing to support the use of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

While we are grateful for these positive steps forward, we must also address a gap in the bill that threatens our ability to assist Ohio's children in addressing their mental health needs. For

¹ Ohio Revised Code 3313.5318, 3313.60, and 3319.073.

the first time, our organization received funding² last year from the state that is helping us expand into 50 new schools and reach 40,000 new students. Unfortunately, that funding – \$250,000 annually – is being eliminated by HB 96.

We urge you to restore this much-needed funding.

This funding will help support our team to:

- expand into 100 new schools, supporting 80,000 new students and their teachers, including in rural and Appalachian areas of the state, which have some of the highest suicide rates in the state;
- train and certify additional program managers and educators to meet the surging demand for our programming; and
- continue to expand education to parents and caregivers, which has the potential to reach on average 1,500 parents per school served.

Investments in prevention matter, and schools are on the front lines of this urgent issue. These initiatives reduce the long-term costs of crisis intervention and, most importantly, save lives. By equipping students with the knowledge and tools to support their mental well-being, we are fostering safer, healthier school environments where every student can thrive—both in the classroom and as they enter the workforce.

As the youth mental health crisis intensifies, the stakes have never been higher, but neither has our resolve. Together, we can change the trajectory for Ohio's youth, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to build a healthy, hopeful future.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions you may have.

² Adjusted Line Item 336519, Community Projects, via Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services.