



Terri Miller, Empower Tusc Suicide Prevention Committee Chair

Interested Party Testimony

June 24, 2024

Chairwoman Pavliga, Vice Chairwoman White, Ranking Member Brewer, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on behalf of Empower Tusc Suicide Prevention Committee. My name is Terri Miller and I am the committee chairwoman.

Empower Tusc is a local coalition in Tuscarawas County aimed at empowering the community to prevent youth substance use and promote mental health wellness by implementing effective prevention, education and awareness strategies.

I am writing to express my strong support for the inclusion of the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline telephone number, 988, on student identification cards, planners, and electronic portals in schools and higher education institutions, as outlined in the recent bill proposal.

As the Empower Tusc Suicide Prevention Committee Chair and an advocate for mental health awareness, I believe that easy access to crisis intervention services is crucial for our youth, particularly those in grades nine through twelve and students at institutions of higher education. Integrating the 988 number into everyday items like student IDs and planners ensures that vital resources are readily available to students who may be experiencing emotional distress or contemplating suicide.

Mental health challenges among students have become increasingly prevalent, exacerbated by academic pressures and social dynamics. It is imperative that we provide proactive measures to support their well-being and offer immediate assistance when needed. The National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline plays a pivotal role in this regard, offering confidential support and connecting individuals to local resources that can provide ongoing care.

By mandating the inclusion of the 988 number on student identification cards, planners, and electronic portals, we empower students to seek help for themselves or their peers without fear of stigma or judgment. This initiative not only promotes mental health awareness but also demonstrates our commitment to fostering a supportive and compassionate learning environment.

I commend your efforts in recognizing the importance of mental health in educational settings and taking proactive steps to implement this crucial measure. It is my hope that this bill receives widespread support and swift passage to ensure that all students have access to the resources they need to thrive.

Thank you for considering my views on this matter. I look forward to seeing the positive impact of this legislation on our community's youth and educational institutions. Please feel free to contact me at 330-440-7320 or at terri.miller@OhioGuidestone.org if you have any question or require further information

Sincerely,

Terri Miller