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Memorandum to the Ohio House of Representatives, Behavioral Health Committee

From: The Ohio Council of Behavioral Health & Family Services Providers

Subj: Proponent Statement in Support of HB 571

Date: June 25, 2024

Chair Pavliga, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Brewer and members of the House Behavioral Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony in support of HB 571, legislation that would help to address stigma around student mental health challenges, and raise awareness of the 988 - National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline telephone number.

The Ohio Council of Behavioral Health and Family Services Providers is a statewide trade and advocacy organization that represents over 170 private businesses that provide prevention, mental health and addiction treatment, crisis, and recovery services in communities throughout Ohio. We applaud the sponsor of this important legislation – Representative Andrea White – for her leadership, keen insight and focus on the very challenging policy issue of youth mental health and suicide, and the collaborate nature in which she and her very able staff have developed this legislation.

Indeed, HB 571 is sound policy that would complement and support the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addictions Services' efforts to (OhioMHAS) implement and deploy its statewide 988 and crisis services infrastructure plan. As the members of this committee understand, youth mental health and student suicide rates are crises affecting too many Ohio communities and families. HB 571 is a step in the right direction.

Accordingly, the Ohio Council strongly supports HB 571, and encourages this committee to swiftly pass the measure and report it out for a vote in the Ohio House.

Again, thank you to Chair Pavliga and the committee for the opportunity to offer the Ohio Council's perspective on HB 571. If the committee has any questions or would like to discuss this matter in greater detail, please contact Geoff Collver at collver@theohiocouncil.org.