

# SB 323 Jason Flatt Act

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My name is Karen Smart, I am a proponent of and providing a written testimony for support of the SB 323, Jason Flatt Act. I am struggling deeply, to write to you on behalf of a young man's voice that is no longer heard. This young man is Jacob Isaac Wessel. Jacob was one month into his 15<sup>th</sup> birthday, on April 19, 2010, when sometime during the night he shot himself in the heart with a .22 caliber rifle. Jacob took more than just his life. He took with him the innocence of every classmate, the hearts of an entire community and the spirit of life from his family.

***You may be thinking***, like me, Jacob's mother, ***why did his family not see this coming?*** It's for the same reason that our teachers where Jacob spent much of his time in school and extracurricular activities didn't see it; **LACK OF EDUCATION**.

Only you can make this happen for Kansas youth by choosing to approve the SB 323, Jason Flatt Act. Some facts of the program and suicide that I'd like you to consider are:

1. 16 other states have already passed this important law. Those State's Dept. of Education and their State Teachers Associations support the Act and more importantly they are seeing results.
2. Suicide is the second leading cause of death by our youth ages 10-24 in the United States of America.
3. 4 out of 5 teens who attempt suicide have given clear warning signs. Education of this silent epidemic can only help reduce these numbers.
- 4. The Jason Flatt Act can be passed without a fiscal note.**
5. Suicide is one of the leading causes of preventable death in Kansas that you can have a hand in stopping by approving this sponsored bill.



Thank you for considering this bill and reading my testament.