



if The Jason Foundation®

Working to Give Our Youth a Promise for Tomorrow

To Senate Education Committee,

Sorry I could not be in person to testify for SB 323 due to a prior commitment. This single piece of legislation will save lives in the Great State of Kansas. In 1997, I lost my youngest son, Jason –age 16, to a “Silent Epidemic” that still today is one of the leading causes of death for our youth nationwide. To lose a son, daughter, grandson or granddaughter is one of the most terrible things that can happen to a parent or grandparent...especially if the tragedy could have been prevented.

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for young people ages 10-24 in Kansas. Specifically for ages 12-18, your middle and high school age youth, suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for Kansas youth. Nationally, suicide is listed not only as one of the “**leading causes of death**” for our youth...but one of the “leading causes of **PREVENTABLE** death” for our youth. According to the 2013 Youth Risk Behavioral Survey – CDC / Kansas:

- ❖ 16.4% of surveyed youth in Kansas reported “seriously considering suicide” in the past twelve months. **If nothing is done differently** to affect this percentage, that will mean over 34,145 youth in Kansas will “seriously consider suicide” in the coming twelve months.
- ❖ 8.4% of the surveyed youth in Kansas answered “YES” when asked if they had attempted suicide in the past twelve months. **If nothing is done differently** to affect this percentage that will mean over 17,489 youth in Kansas will come to a point in the next twelve months that will lead to a suicide attempt.

It is **doing something differently** that I want to ask your support. Education and awareness are the basis for building the foundation for the prevention of youth suicide. The training of teachers, as a primary goal, is listed as part of the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention. Providing educators with the information, tools and resources to better recognize and respond to at-risk students for suicidal ideation will save lives! Four out of five youth who will attempt suicide will demonstrate “warning signs” before the attempt. This training **IS NOT** to make educators / teachers into counselors, but to help enable them to better be able to recognize and assist in getting help for possible at-risk students.

The Jason Flatt Act – KS / SB 323 is sponsored by Senator Smith in the Senate. This legislation, modeled after The Jason Flatt Act that has been passed in 16 states, will require educators to include as part of their “required subjects” for In-Service training modules on youth suicide awareness and prevention. The bill also has no-fiscal note.

If you have not signed on as a co-sponsor, I hope you will consider doing so and by supporting The Jason Flatt Act – KS / SB 323, you will help “**do something different**” that will save young lives in Kansas. If you would like more information, please contact Senator Greg Smith or myself (clarkflatt@jasonfoundation.com) and we will be glad to provide any additional information you may need for your consideration.

Thank you for your time and I hope support.

Regards,

Clark Flatt

President, The Jason Foundation, Inc. and “Jason’s Dad”

Educational Programs and Seminars in Awareness and Prevention of Youth Suicide

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