

April 17, 2007

SUPPORT YOUTH MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Dear Colleague:

We hope that you will join us in support of funding for a comprehensive strategy toward addressing suicide prevention and early intervention for our children and young adults. President Bush signed the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial (GLSM) Act (P.L. 108-355) into law on October 21, 2004. Attached is a letter to the Appropriations Committee requesting support to provide to provide at least \$40 million for vital initiatives that increase suicide prevention services, awareness, research and technical assistance.

Since the program's inception, 29 states, seven tribes, and 55 colleges and universities have received grants through this important law. In 2006, \$27 million was provided for the Act, allowing more states, tribes, and colleges and universities to pursue intervention and prevention programs. The program was flat funded at that same level in the 2007 Continuing Resolution.

Each year more than 3,000 Americans between the ages of 15 to 24 years die by suicide, making suicide the third leading cause of death for this age group. This is a startling statistic, made even more alarming when you consider that 70 percent of people who die by suicide tell someone about it in advance. Yet, most of these young people have not received any sort of counseling or treatment. This law is the first comprehensive step to target funding to states, tribes, and our colleges and universities to address youth suicide.

We encourage you to join us in support of mental and behavioral health by signing the attached letter to the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Subcommittee. If you would like to sign this letter or have any questions, please contact Lindsay Morris (Smith) at 224-8710 or Jeff Regan (Dodd) at 224-6480.

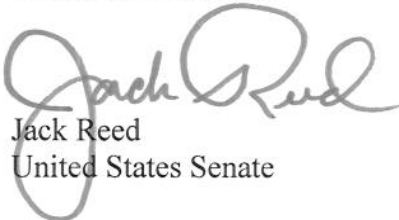
Sincerely,



Gordon H. Smith
United States Senate



Christopher J. Dodd
United States Senate



Jack Reed
United States Senate

April 27, 2007

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Appropriations Labor, Health and
Human Services Subcommittee
184 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Ranking Member
Appropriations Labor, Health and
Human Services Subcommittee
184 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Specter:

On October 21, 2004, Congress and the President took an historic step toward ending youth suicide by passing and signing into law the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial (GLSM) Act (P.L. 108-355). In 2006, we were pleased the programs under this law received \$27 million to focus on youth suicide early intervention and prevention activities.

Unfortunately, for 2007 the program was flat funded at that same level. This year we urge you to provide at least full funding authorized for fiscal year 2007 – \$40 million. Given the law is up for reauthorization this year, we hope that you will provide funds consistent with any newly authorized levels.

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Funding for the law is directed to three primary elements. The first component is the Suicide Prevention Technical Assistance Center, which is currently authorized at \$5 million to support its mission of providing technical assistance and support to grantees. Additionally, \$30 million is authorized to help states and tribes develop and implement statewide youth suicide early intervention and prevention strategies that will raise awareness and educate people about mental illness and the risk of suicide, help identify young people with mental illnesses, and allow states to expand access to treatment options. Finally, \$5 million is authorized to fund a matching-grant program to colleges and universities to help raise awareness about youth suicide, as well as enable those institutions to train students and faculty to identify and intervene when youth are in crisis, and develop a system to refer students for care.
