

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to the law as it existed prior to this session of the General Assembly.

1 State of Arkansas
2 85th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2005
4

As Engrossed: S3/10/05

A Bill

SENATE BILL 969

5 By: Senators J. Jeffress, G. Jeffress
6
7

For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO CREATE THE ARKANSAS YOUTH SUICIDE
10 PREVENTION TASK FORCE; TO PROVIDE FOR APPOINTMENT
11 OF ITS MEMBERS; TO DESCRIBE ITS MISSION AND
12 RESPONSIBILITIES; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.
13

Subtitle

14 THE ARKANSAS YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION
15 ACT.
16
17
18

19 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
20

21 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 20, Chapter 77 is amended to add an
22 additional subchapter to read as follows:

23 Subchapter 16 – Arkansas Youth Suicide Prevention Act.
24

25 20-77-1601. Title.

26 The subchapter shall be known and may be cited as the “Arkansas Youth
27 Suicide Prevention Act”.
28

29 20-77-1602. Legislative findings.

30 (a) The General Assembly finds that youth suicide is a serious problem
31 that:

32 (1) Takes the life of a youngster who has only begun to live;

33 and

34 (2) Can be prevented with suicide intervention strategies.

35 (b) The General Assembly also recognizes that suicide is the third
36 leading cause of death for young people between the ages of fifteen (15) and



1 twenty-four (24) and the fourth leading cause of death for persons between
2 the ages of ten (10) and fourteen (14).

3
4 20-77-1603. Purpose.

5 The purpose of this subchapter is to establish:

6 (1) A task force that is made up of youth students, classroom
7 teachers, and school counselors that addresses issues related to the
8 prevention of youth suicide in an age group that is most vulnerable to
9 depression; and

10 (2) An advisory council to provide the task force with
11 scientific-based information on youth suicide, including suicide prevention
12 best practices programs and recommendations for the implementation of proven
13 suicide prevention programs for young people in the State of Arkansas.

14
15 20-77-1604. Task Force Creation -- Terms.

16 (a) There is established the Arkansas Youth Suicide Prevention Task
17 Force.

18 (b) The task force shall consist of sixteen (16) members as follows:

19 (1)(A) The Governor shall appoint eight (8) members as follows:

20 (i) Two (2) students who are in grades seven (7) or
21 eight (8) at the time of appointment;

22 (ii) Two (2) students who are in grades nine through
23 twelve (9-12) at the time of appointment; and

24 (iii) Four (4) students who attend an institution of
25 higher education in the state.

26 (B) Each student appointed under subdivision (b)(1) shall
27 reside in and represent a different University of Arkansas for Medical
28 Sciences Area Health Education Center region;

29 (2) The Governor shall appoint two (2) members who are classroom
30 teachers;

31 (3) The Governor shall appoint two (2) members who are school
32 counselors;

33 (4) The President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall appoint two
34 (2) members who represent the state at large:

35 (A) One (1) student who is in grades nine through twelve
36 (9-12) at the time of appointment; and

1 (B) One (1) student who attends an institution of higher
2 education in the state; and

3 (5) The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint
4 two (2) members who represent the state at large:

5 (A) One (1) student who is in grades nine through twelve
6 (9-12) at the time of appointment; and

7 (B) One (1) student who attends an institution of higher
8 education in the state.

9 (c)(1)(A) The Governor shall select student members from a list of
10 interested students submitted to the Department of Education. Each student
11 on the list shall have been recommended by the superintendent of the school
12 district in which the student attends school, by the governing body of the
13 charter school or private school at which the student attends school, or by
14 the president of the institution of higher education at which the student is
15 enrolled.

16 (B) The Governor shall select student members to represent
17 each of the following University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Area Health
18 Education Center regions:

19 (i) Central;

20 (ii) South central;

21 (iii) North central;

22 (iv) Northeast;

23 (v) Northwest;

24 (vi) Southwest;

25 (vii) South; and

26 (viii) Delta.

27 (C) Student members shall be at least thirteen (13) years
28 of age but less than twenty-two (22) years of age when appointed.

29 (2) The Governor shall select the classroom teacher members from
30 a list of interested teachers who are recommended by the Arkansas Education
31 Association.

32 (3) The Governor shall select the school counselor members from
33 a list of interested school counselors who are recommended by the Arkansas
34 Counseling Association.

35 (4) All members shall be residents of the State of Arkansas at
36 the time of appointment and throughout their term.

1 (d)(1) In 2005, eight (8) members shall be appointed by the Governor
2 to serve as follows:

3 (A) Two (2) for a term to expire June 30, 2006;

4 (B) Two (2) for a term to expire June 30, 2007;

5 (C) Two (2) for a term to expire June 30, 2008; and

6 (D) Two (2) for a term to expire June 30, 2009.

7 (2) In 2005, two (2) members shall be appointed by the Speaker
8 of the House of Representatives to serve as follows:

9 (A) One (1) for a term to expire June 30, 2006; and

10 (B) One (1) for a term to expire June 30, 2007.

11 (3) In 2005, two (2) members shall be appointed by the President
12 Pro Tempore of the Senate to serve as follows:

13 (A) One (1) for a term to expire June 30, 2008; and

14 (B) One (1) for a term to expire June 30, 2009.

15 (4) Subsequent appointments are for a term of two (2) years.

16 (e)(1) If a vacancy occurs in an appointed position for any reason,
17 the vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the official that made the
18 appointment.

19 (2) The new appointee shall serve for the remainder of the
20 unexpired term.

21
22 20-77-1605. Task Force -- Mission.

23 The Arkansas Youth Suicide Prevention Task Force shall:

24 (1) Assist in increasing the awareness of youth suicide among
25 school personnel and community leaders;

26 (2) Enhance the school climate and relationships between
27 teachers, counselors, and students to encourage everyone to recognize the
28 signs of suicidal tendencies and other facts about youth suicide;

29 (3) Encourage the development and implementation of school-based
30 youth suicide prevention programs and pilot projects;

31 (4) Utilize community resources in the development and
32 implementation of youth suicide prevention programs through cooperative
33 efforts;

34 (5) Increase the awareness of students of the relationship
35 between drug and alcohol use and youth suicide;

36 (6) Advocate for programs to collect data on youth suicide

1 attempts; and

2 (7) Develop a program of suicide prevention for distribution to
3 the schools of the State of Arkansas.

4
5 20-77-1606. Task Force -- Meetings.

6 (a)(1) The Arkansas Youth Suicide Prevention Task Force shall hold a
7 meeting at least one (1) time during each quarter of the calendar year.

8 (2) At the end of each calendar year, the task force shall
9 submit a report to the Director of the Department of Education.

10 (b)(1) The Director of the Department of Education shall call the
11 first meeting of the task force no later than thirty (30) days after all of
12 the members are appointed to the task force.

13 (2) At the first meeting, the task force shall determine by
14 majority vote who shall serve as chair, vice chair, and secretary.

15 (3) The task force shall elect officers annually to serve one-
16 year terms at the first meeting of the task force in each calendar year.

17 (c) A quorum shall consist of not less than nine (9) members. An
18 affirmative vote of a quorum is necessary for the disposition of business.

19 (d)(1) The Department of Education shall provide staff and office
20 space to the task force.

21 (2) The office space shall be in Little Rock, Arkansas.

22 (e)(1) Members shall receive no pay for services with respect to
23 attendance at each meeting.

24 (2) However, if funds are appropriated for the purpose, members
25 are entitled to expense reimbursement under § 25-16-902 for each day the task
26 force meets.

27
28 20-77-1607. Advisory Council Creation -- Meetings.

29 (a) To assist the Arkansas Youth Suicide Prevention Task Force, there
30 is established the Advisory Council to the Arkansas Youth Suicide Prevention
31 Task Force.

32 (b) The advisory council shall consist of the following members:

33 (1) The Chair of the Department of Psychiatry of the University
34 of Arkansas for Medical Sciences shall appoint two (2) members, one (1) of
35 whom shall be designated as the chair of the advisory council;

36 (2) The Director of the Division of Behavioral Health of the

1 Department of Human Services shall appoint one (1) member from the Division
2 of Behavioral Health;

3 (3) The Dean of the College of Public Health of the University
4 of Arkansas for Medical Sciences shall appoint one (1) member from the
5 Department of Health Behavior and Health Education of the University of
6 Arkansas for Medical Sciences;

7 (4) The Director of the Department of Education shall appoint
8 (1) member;

9 (5) The Chair of the Department of Psychiatry of the University
10 of Arkansas for Medical Sciences shall appoint one (1) member from a list of
11 three (3) persons submitted by the Arkansas office of the National Alliance
12 for the Mentally Ill;

13 (6) The Chair of the Department of Psychiatry of the University
14 of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Health shall appoint one (1) member from a
15 list of three (3) persons submitted by the board of directors of Arkansans
16 for a Drug Free Youth; and

17 (7) The chair of the advisory council shall appoint one (1)
18 interested parent from a list of interested parents who respond to a
19 newspaper notice placed by the Department of Psychiatry of the University of
20 Arkansas for Medical Sciences within thirty (30) days of the effective date
21 of this act.

22 (c) Each member of the advisory council shall serve for a term of two
23 (2) years.

24 (d)(1) If a vacancy occurs in an appointed position for any reason,
25 the vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the official that made the
26 appointment.

27 (2) The new appointee shall serve for the remainder of the
28 unexpired term.

29 (e)(1) The advisory council shall meet at the times and places that
30 the chair deems necessary, but no meetings shall be held outside the State of
31 Arkansas.

32 (2) Five (5) of the members of the advisory council shall
33 constitute a quorum for the purpose of transacting business.

34 (3) All actions of the task force shall be by a quorum.

35 (f)(1) Members shall receive no pay for services with respect to
36 attendance at each meeting.

1 (2) However, if funds are appropriated for the purpose, members
2 are entitled to expense reimbursement under § 25-16-902 for each day the task
3 force meets.

4
5 20-77-1608. Advisory Council -- Mission.

6 The Advisory Council to the Arkansas Youth Suicide Prevention Task
7 Force shall:

8 (1) Serve as a liaison between the Arkansas Youth Suicide
9 Prevention Task Force and the scientific and treatment community to ensure
10 that task force activities are firmly based in effective and safe suicide
11 prevention activities;

12 (2) Research and make recommendations to the Arkansas Youth Suicide
13 Prevention Task Force, the House Interim Committee on Public Health, Welfare and
14 Labor, the Senate Interim Committee on Public Health, Welfare and Labor, and
15 the General Assembly regarding successful youth suicide prevention programs
16 used in other states;

17 (3) Develop a plan for a model youth suicide prevention program
18 that can be implemented throughout the state with site-specific
19 recommendations and recommend a timeline for the implementation of the model
20 program;

21 (4)(A) If funds are appropriated for the purpose, host a
22 conference with national experts in the field of youth suicide prevention.

23 (B) The Department of Psychiatry of the University of
24 Arkansas for Medical Sciences shall coordinate the conference in conjunction
25 with the task force.

26 (C) Invitees to the conference shall include students in
27 grades seven through twelve (7-12), college students, teachers, professors,
28 staff, and administrators of public schools, private schools, and
29 institutions of higher education, mental health professionals, legislators,
30 and other interested persons;

31 (5) Monitor and disburse appropriations for the Arkansas Youth
32 Suicide Prevention Task Force, the advisory council, and related activities;

33 (6) Apply for, receive, and disburse grants related to youth
34 suicide prevention and research as the advisory council deems appropriate;
35 and

36 (7) Participate in the quarterly meetings of the task force.

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SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-18-1005(a)(7), concerning student services programs in Arkansas schools, is amended to read as follows:

(7) The distribution of a suicide prevention public awareness program developed for distribution by the ~~interprogram task force established by the Lieutenant Governor's Teenage~~ Arkansas Youth Suicide Prevention Task Force.

/s/ J. Jeffress