

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 H3/25/05*

# 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 seventeen (17) 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;

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

9                   (6) The Attorney General or the Attorney General's designee.

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

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

20                           (i) Central;

21                           (ii) South central;

22                           (iii) North central;

23                           (iv) Northeast;

24                           (v) Northwest;

25                           (vi) Southwest;

26                           (vii) South; and

27                           (viii) Delta.

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

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

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

36                  (4) All members shall be residents of the State of Arkansas at

1 the time of appointment and throughout their term.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

22  
23 20-77-1605. Task Force -- Mission.

24 The Arkansas Youth Suicide Prevention Task Force shall:

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

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

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

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

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

1           (6) Advocate for programs to collect data on youth suicide  
2 attempts; and

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

5  
6           20-77-1606. Task Force -- Meetings.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

28  
29           20-77-1607. Advisory Council Creation -- Meetings.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

36          (f)(1) Members shall receive no pay for services with respect to

1 attendance at each meeting.

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

5  
6 20-77-1608. Advisory Council -- Mission.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

