

1 State of Arkansas
2 92nd General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2019
4

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1963

5 By: Representative Gazaway
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For An Act To Be Entitled

8 AN ACT CONCERNING THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS FOR
9 MEDICAL SCIENCES PSYCHIATRIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE; TO
10 CREATE A SCHOOL SAFETY AND CRISIS LINE; TO CREATE A
11 SCHOOL SAFETY AND CRISIS LINE FUND; AND FOR OTHER
12 PURPOSES.
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Subtitle

15 CONCERNING THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS FOR
16 MEDICAL SCIENCES PSYCHIATRIC RESEARCH
17 INSTITUTE; TO CREATE A SCHOOL SAFETY AND
18 CRISIS LINE; AND TO CREATE A SCHOOL
19 SAFETY AND CRISIS LINE FUND.
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23 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
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25 SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Legislative findings.

26 The General Assembly finds that:

27 (1) A survey of thirty-nine (39) states conducted by the Centers
28 for Disease Control and Prevention from September 2016 to December 2017 found
29 that Arkansas had the:

30 (A) Highest percentage of high school students who had
31 been bullied on school property;

32 (B) Highest percentage of high school students who had
33 ever been physically forced to have sexual intercourse;

34 (C) Highest percentage of high school students who had
35 experienced sexual violence by anyone;

36 (D) Highest percentage of high school students who had



1 experienced physical dating violence;

2 (E) Highest percentage of high school students who had
3 felt sad or hopeless;

4 (F) Highest percentage of high school students who had
5 seriously considered attempting suicide;

6 (G) Highest percentage of high school students who had
7 made a plan about how they would attempt suicide;

8 (H) Second highest percentage of high school students who
9 had actually attempted suicide;

10 (I) Second highest percentage of high school students
11 whose suicide attempt had resulted in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that
12 had to be treated by a doctor or nurse;

13 (J) Second highest percentage of high school students who
14 had been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property;

15 (K) Second highest percentage of high school students who
16 had been involved in a physical fight;

17 (L) Fourth highest percentage of high school students who
18 had been electronically bullied; and

19 (M) Fifth highest percentage of high school students who
20 did not go to school because they had felt unsafe at school or on their way
21 to or from school;

22 (2) A recent study by the nonprofit research organization Child
23 Trends found that fifty-six percent (56%) of Arkansas children have undergone
24 at least one (1) adverse childhood experience, the highest percentage of any
25 other state in the nation; and

26 (3) This act is necessary to respond to and counter these trends
27 and to provide an avenue for students in Arkansas to report incidents that
28 cause or have the potential to cause physical, mental, or emotional damage to
29 students.

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31 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 18, Subchapter 1, is amended
32 to add additional sections to read as follows:

33 6-18-110. School safety and crisis line.

34 (a)(1) The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Psychiatric
35 Research Institute shall establish and operate a pilot program that creates a
36 school safety and crisis line to be known as "ARSafeSchools" that can be

1 accessed by the following means, including without limitation:

2 (A) Telephone;

3 (B) Text message; and

4 (C) Smartphone application.

5 (2) Participation in the pilot program established under
 6 subdivision (a)(1) of this section shall be voluntary for public schools in
 7 this state.

8 (b) The school safety and crisis line under this section shall:

9 (1) Provide a means for a student to anonymously report:

10 (A) Unsafe, violent, or criminal activities or the threat
 11 of unsafe, violent, or criminal activities at, near, or concerning a public
 12 school;

13 (B) Incidents of bullying, harassment, or hazing,
 14 including without limitation conduct described in § 6-18-514;

15 (C) Incidents of physical or sexual abuse committed
 16 against a student by:

17 (i) Another student;

18 (ii) A school employee;

19 (iii) A school volunteer; or

20 (iv) Any other person if the physical or sexual
 21 abuse occurred at a public school or a school-sponsored event;

22 (D) Thoughts of suicide experienced by the student or by
 23 another individual whom the student knows;

24 (E) Feelings experienced by the student of:

25 (i) Stress;

26 (ii) Depression; or

27 (iii) Anxiety;

28 (F) Issues involving drug abuse, alcohol abuse, or both
 29 regarding the student or another individual whom the student knows;

30 (G) Issues with addiction faced by the student or another
 31 individual whom the student knows;

32 (H) Domestic violence experienced by the student or by
 33 another individual whom the student knows;

34 (I) Infliction of self-harm by the student or by another
 35 individual whom the student knows;

36 (J) Feelings of grief or loss, or both; and

1 (K) Other behaviors, incidents, actions, or threats that
2 the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Psychiatric Research
3 Institute may determine are important for a student to report under this
4 section;

5 (2) Provide crisis intervention, including without limitation
6 suicide prevention services, to students experiencing emotional or
7 psychiatric distress;

8 (3) Operate twenty-four (24) hours per day, seven (7) days per
9 week; and

10 (4) Begin operation at a time and in phases determined by the
11 University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Psychiatric Research Institute to
12 allow time for the establishment of the school safety and crisis line and the
13 training of personnel to carry out the operations of the school safety and
14 crisis line under this section.

15 (c)(1) Personnel operating the school safety and crisis line shall,
16 when necessary or as required by law, promptly forward a report received
17 under subsection (b) of this section to appropriate:

18 (A) School officials; or

19 (B) Law enforcement agencies.

20 (2) An individual who acts in good faith under this section
21 while operating the school safety and crisis line shall not be liable for
22 civil damages for an act or omission taken in good faith while operating the
23 school safety and crisis line so long as the act or omission does not
24 constitute gross negligence or willful misconduct.

25 (d) The University of Arkansas Medical Sciences Psychiatric Research
26 Institute shall:

27 (1) Establish, operate, maintain, provide training, and make all
28 decisions regarding a school safety and crisis line under this section;

29 (2) Collaborate with public schools for the implementation and
30 use of the school safety and crisis line under this section; and

31 (3) Use funding from the ARSafeSchools Fund under § 6-18-111 to
32 provide training for personnel regarding the operation of the school safety
33 and crisis line under this section.

34 (e) Messages, recordings, and any personal information received by an
35 individual operating a school safety and crisis line under this section are
36 confidential and not subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information

1 Act of 1967, § 25-19-101 et seq.

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3 6-18-111. School safety and crisis line fund – Report.

4 (a) There is created on the books of the Treasurer of State, the
5 Auditor of State, and the Chief Fiscal Officer of the State a miscellaneous
6 fund to be known as the "ARSafeSchools Fund".

7 (b) The fund shall consist of:

8 (1) Moneys obtained from private grants or other sources that
9 are designated to be credited to the fund; and

10 (2) Any other funds authorized or provided by law.

11 (c) The fund shall be used by the University of Arkansas for Medical
12 Sciences Psychiatric Research Institute solely to create and maintain the
13 ARSafeSchools school safety and crisis line under § 6-18-110.

14 (d) Moneys remaining in the fund at the end of each fiscal year shall
15 carry forward and be made available for the purposes stated in this section
16 in the next fiscal year.

17 (e) The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Psychiatric
18 Research Institute is not required to implement provisions of this section if
19 the ARSafeSchools school safety and crisis line under § 6-18-110 is not
20 funded.

21 (f)(1) The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Psychiatric
22 Research Institute shall submit an annual report containing the following
23 information to the Legislative Council or, if the General Assembly is in
24 session, the Joint Budget Committee:

25 (A) The balance of the fund as of the reporting date;

26 (B) A list of administrative costs paid for from the fund,
27 including without limitation salaries, pensions, and packages;

28 (C) The total revenue received by the fund during the
29 reporting period; and

30 (D) A detailed description of steps taken to create and
31 implement the ARSafeSchools school safety and crisis line.

32 (2) The annual report required under this subsection shall be
33 submitted by January 1 and July 1 of each year.

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35 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-18-502(c), concerning guidelines for the
36 development of school district student discipline policies, is amended to add

1 an additional subdivision to read as follows:

2 (6) Establish procedures for responding to reports received
3 through the school safety and crisis line under § 6-18-110.

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5 SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-18-503(a)(1)(C), concerning written
6 student discipline policies, is amended to add an additional subdivision to
7 read as follows:

8 (iii) Procedures for responding to reports received
9 through the school safety and crisis line under § 6-18-110.

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11 SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 6-18-514(e)(2), concerning antibullying
12 policies, is amended to add an additional subdivision to read as follows:

13 (H) Include information on how to make an anonymous report
14 to the school safety and crisis line under § 6-18-110.

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