

DEAR COLLEAGUE LETTER:

Deadline for Members of Congress to sign on is Thursday COB

Support Continued Funding for
Mental and Behavioral Health Services
for Our Nation's Youth

Dear Colleague:

We hope that you will join us in support of funding for a comprehensive strategy toward addressing suicide, suicide prevention, and mental and behavioral health in high schools and on college campuses. As you may remember, President Bush signed the Garrett Lee Smith Act into law in October 2004. Attached is a letter to the House Labor/HHS/Ed Appropriators requesting support to provide full funding of \$27 million for the Act in FY2006. In its fiscal year 2005 Omnibus Appropriations bill, H.R. 4818, Congress provided \$10 million for the important programs that will focus on youth suicide early intervention and prevention activities.

Each year more than 3,000 Americans between the ages of 15 to 24 years commit 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 commit 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 urge you to join us in support of mental and behavioral health by signing the attached letter to House appropriators. This funding is critical to helping save America's youth. If you would like to sign this letter or have any questions, please contact Jennifer Luciano (Rep. Davis) at 225-5006, Erin Duncan (Rep. Osborne) at 225-6435, or Dana Lichtenberg (Rep. Gordon) at 225-4231.

Sincerely,
Bart Gordon, Member of Congress
Tom Osborne, Member of Congress
Danny K. Davis, Member of Congress

FUNDING REQUEST LETTER:

April XX, 2005

The Honorable Ralph Regula
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Obey
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Regula and Congressman Obey:

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 Act. By improving diagnosis and access to treatment, this bill will help an untold number of young people who battle with mental illness. Last year, we were very pleased to have \$10 million included in the fiscal year 2005 Omnibus Appropriations bill, H.R. 4818, for the important programs that will focus on youth suicide early intervention and prevention activities. We ask for your support to provide full funding of \$27 million for the Act in FY2006.

Each year more than 3,000 Americans between the ages of 15 to 24 years commit 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 commit 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.

Funding for the Act is directed to three primary elements. The first component is the Suicide Prevention Technical Assistance Center, which was authorized at \$4 million to support its mission of providing technical assistance and support to grantees. Additionally, \$18 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 necessary 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.

We appreciate your commitment to improving the lives of persons suffering from mental disorders and look forward to working with you to make sure that the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act is fully funded in FY2006.

Sincerely,