

SB 627 -- SUICIDE PREVENTION AND AWARENESS

SPONSOR: Nasheed

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Health and Mental Health Policy by a vote of 10 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Select Committee on Social Services by a vote of 10 to 0.

This bill requires each public institution of higher education to develop and implement a policy to advise students and staff on suicide prevention programs available on and off campus that includes specified topic areas. Such policy must also advise students, faculty, and staff of the proper procedures for identifying and addressing the needs of students exhibiting suicidal tendencies or behavior, and shall require training where appropriate.

Each institution must provide all incoming students with information about depression and suicide prevention resources available to students. The information contained in such policy, in addition to any applicable free-of-cost prevention materials or programs, must be posted on the websites of each institution. Each institution must establish and maintain methods of anonymous reporting of unsafe, potentially harmful, dangerous, violent, or criminal activities, or the threat of such activities. Such methods must ensure the anonymity of the reporting party.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill requires each institution of higher education in Missouri to implement a policy to advise students and staff of suicide prevention programs available at the school. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for college-age students. The prevalence of suicidal thoughts is highest in people age 18 to 29 years. Campus suicide prevention programs can make a significant difference in decreasing instances of suicide. College-age students need this sort of program to address the suicide threat these students face.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Nasheed; Rachel Greathouse, Empower Missouri; Scott Perkins, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Missouri; Abram Chess Messer, self; Melody Seiger, American Foundation For Suicide Prevention; and the Missouri National Education Association.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.