

Testimony

To: House Committee on Ways and Means
From: Rep. Andrea Schroeder
Subject: HB 5482 – “Save Our Students”
Date: Wednesday, June 17, 2020

Thank you, Chairman Iden and Committee Members,

It is my pleasure to join you today to humbly ask that you consider supporting HB 5482 that will require schools that issue student identification cards to include a crisis and suicide prevention hotline on each card.

This issue was brought to me after 2 students died by suicide in our community. This is something many of us have had the unfortunate reality of encountering. Kris and Joe, who joined me last week to testify before the House Committee on Education, are integral members of our community who lost their son Nikola to suicide. Their story spurred this bill to Save Our Students.

I would like to highlight the main pieces of this legislation. The crisis and suicide prevention line added to ID cards would have to be staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. These numbers also can be local facilities. For example, my district’s local schools preferred Common Ground Resource and Crisis Center, a local, reliable resource. But these could also be statewide numbers, like the Michigan CARES hotline established by Representative Whiteford’s bill, now Public Act 12, or national hotlines.

This bill does more than just add a number, it also encourages schools to post helpful information around the building and on their website for prevention services. Getting the materials directly in the students’ hands is the most challenging part and these materials will help convey details about mental health and the services available to our kids. These would be provided by the Department of Health and Human Services and should come at a minimal cost to them.

This legislation is simple: let’s get the many resources we have directly in the hands of our students to help curb the increase in suicide. It is no longer a question of what we can do, but what we must do to save our students. I am proud to take this first step to better our communities and ask for your support of this bill. I will now take your questions.

End