

Betty Brennan
SB 333
Opponent
Verbal

Committee members, thank you for letting us be heard today. As many of you already know, my oldest son at age 15 became 1 of the 454 suicides in the State of Kansas in 2014. The 26th will mark the fourth year of this nightmare. Today isn't about Kyler, no matter what is decided in this room. It won't bring him back.

Today is about being grateful that SB 323 The Jason Flatt Act was signed into law. Let me share a quick story about my small town. Several months ago a few 13 year old girls were having a sleepover. At some point in the late evening one of the girls, sent a text to a young man around the same same age that worried him. The text wasn't saying she was going to harm herself but was just enough out of character for her that he quickly took his phone to his parents. One being a staff member at our local school. They quickly spotted the signs and within 10 minutes this young lady have parents, and family surrounding her in love and support. After a phone call to a professional it was determined she wasn't a direct threat to herself and was put on a 24 hr watch until she could be seen by a therapist the next day. She safely sleep in her parents bed that night in between them. She has spent some time in therapy and is doing well. Because of the training this staff member had she was able to act quickly and put a plan in place. I thank God every day for everyone involved! My question is, what if this staff member wasn't "SELECTED STAFF" what if she hadn't taken the training? We don't get to decide who will come in contact with our students, or who that trusted adult may be. The bus driver? The lunch helper? The Janitor? The principal? How do we know?

I am 100% for publishing a written plan on school websites for staff, parent, and student to use! The more education the better prevention. I do believe we need to keep the one hour training or increase it. We need to set an expectation so everything is clear without the grey in between. I have had staff members thank me for being a part of getting this requirement in Kansas. I have them ask me what is next and when we can start getting education in the hands of our students. I have students asking me what they can do to become more educated. I know we can't save every life, but I do believe SB 323 was a start. I am afraid the the proposed SB 333 is taking a step in the wrong direction.

I pray that by hearing us today you will see the importance of the wording in this bill. In our grieving one thing is for certain we have educated ourselves and those around us. We have researched and problem solved, we have become some of the best tools on this subject. We are not experts but we are a great resource. I BELIEVE in you, and the power you have to serve and protect the children of Kansas, along with supporting the excellent staff members we have been blessed with no matter their title. Thank you