



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Legislation Co-Sponsored by Addabbo to Combat Suicide Among School-Aged Children Approved by State Senate

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR June 15, 2015

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Queens, NY (June 15, 2015): Noting that suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people aged 15 to 24 in the United States, NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. applauded the recent State Senate passage of a bill (S.4261) he co-sponsors to require the State Education Department (SED) and State Office of Mental Health (OMH) to develop materials focusing on suicide prevention and signs of depression among school-aged children and to provide them to educators throughout New York State.

“There is no question that early intervention and recognition of suicidal behavior is key to preventing these heart-breaking incidents among students,” said Addabbo, a member of the Senate Committee on Education. “With teen suicide approaching epidemic proportions, we need to keep our eyes wide open – paying close attention to our children both at home and at school and working to better recognize the signs of impending tragedy.”

Under the bill, the SED and OMH would develop materials on suicide prevention and signs of depression to be made available through their public websites. In addition, SED would be charged with ensuring that suicide prevention instruction is provided to secondary-school age children by certified health education teachers.

“By teaching our teachers about the signs of potential suicidal tendencies, and helping our young people to understand the gravity of this problem – and to know that help is available – I hope we will see fewer students giving up on life before they have had a chance to live it,” said Addabbo. “Our school-age children are already going through so many physical, emotional and psychological changes as they grow up, which may make some of our youth more susceptible to self-harm. We already know that kids can be cruel at times, and when you add in easy access to social media that can be used for ceaseless and horrific bullying, we’re looking at a recipe for possible disaster.”

As the father of two daughters, Addabbo said he is committed to ensuring that all students in New York State are provided with support systems and programs that could very well mean the difference between life and death for at risk-youth. “As a parent, I cannot even begin to imagine the pain and grief of losing a child, particularly by their own hand,” he said. “This educational outreach could help to ensure that fewer mothers and fathers are ever placed in a position of suffering these insurmountable and senseless tragedies.”

Having passed the State Senate, the bill is now under review by the Assembly Education Committee.

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