



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Weekly Radio Address: Suicide Prevention Recommendations

MADISON - Rep. Joan Ballweg (R-Markesan) talks about recommendations from the Speaker's Task Force on Suicide Prevention.

Hello, I'm State Representative Joan Ballweg, Chair of the Speaker's Task Force on Suicide Prevention.

This week we released recommendations to address the growing problem of suicide in our state. In 2017, 918 people took their own lives, and nearly five thousand others tried.

This bi-partisan task force got to work evaluating the current resources in the state, and seeking areas where we can make changes to better serve those in crisis. We heard from experts, family members, and survivors all across the state, including young people and farmers.

The result is a package of ten proposals.

The first will help to better coordinate and enhance existing suicide prevention programs. This includes the creation of a central program at the Department of Health Services (DHS).

DHS will also offer grant opportunities for suicide prevention programs.

For students, we are recommending peer-to-peer programs in high schools, and a prevention hotline on student ID cards.

For farmers, we are asking for tuition assistance grants to help alleviate some of the stress, and better manage their own business.

Also, we propose the option of an interim psychologist license, to help address the dire shortage of mental health professionals in our state.

This is just a sample of our proposals, and there are many more we are still developing. This is a complex issue that requires a multi-faceted approach, and our work is not done yet.

If you or someone you care about needs help, please contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or text the Wisconsin HOPELINE at 741741.

Working together, we can help save lives in Wisconsin.