

Dear House Health Care Committee Members,

The 19th Surgeon General of the United States visited Oregon last week. He said loneliness is one of the most lethal healthcare crisis in America today.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 10 to 24-year-olds in Oregon and those rates are rising.

The Oregon Health Authority has placed a particularly high priority on preventing suicides among children and young adults. They say suicidal tendencies are most often seen when people are 10 to 24 years old.

Social isolation leads to depression. Loneliness can negatively affect one's mental and emotional health as well as their physical well-being. The increased mortality risk of loneliness is compared to that from smoking. Loneliness is about twice as dangerous as obesity. Social isolation impairs immune function and boosts inflammation which can lead to arthritis, type II diabetes, and heart disease. A plethora of studies show that a lack of social connections can increase one's risk of death by at least 50%.

The research shows that internet interactions aren't helping and may be making loneliness worse. A recent study of Facebook users found the amount of time you spend on the social network is inversely related to how happy you feel throughout the day. In a society that judges you based on how expansive your social network appears, loneliness is difficult to fess up to- it feels shameful.

Intended or unintended, isolation will be a very real consequences of HB 3063. Do not isolate over 30,000 Oregon children. Vote NO on HB 3063.

Stacey Black

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