

Submitter: Lysa Carton

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3643

Hello. My name is Lysa Carton. I am in support of HB 3643 which designates October 9th of each year as Oregon Youth Suicide Awareness Day. My family has been deeply affected by the tragic loss of teen Mikalynn Morris. My daughter has been friends with Mikalynn Morris since second grade. Our families have supported the girls in countless softball tournaments, school functions and summer fun. Watching our girls grow up together has been an amazing journey. Unfortunately that journey came to an abrupt end on October 9th, 2024. To say we were shocked when we received the news is a tragic understatement. It is still so hard to grasp today. You always hear about teen suicide but never think it can happen to your child or especially your children's friends. This tragedy has rocked our inner circle to its core. The Morris family is the kind of family you look up to. Mike and Katie are amazing supportive parents with strong bonds with their children. Mikalynn and her little brother Jaxson were always supported with the strong presence of loving grandparents. Mikalynn was a sweet, kind hearted, bubbly fifteen year old that experienced a loss of a friend to suicide months before her own. No one realized the extent Mikaylynn was struggling with this loss until it was too late. As a parent I feel the need to educate and bring awareness to youth mental health is imperative. If this can happen to the Morris family, it can happen to any family. Mikalynns suicide has made me reevaluate everything as a parent. As a parent teen mental health is more difficult than ever to navigate. Witnessing the Morris family navigate this tragedy has been heart wrenching. The work they have done in support of this bill and the openness they have exhibited in telling Mikayln's story to help others is a true testament to their families strength. Families need guidance if they feel their children are at risk. Youth need to be given an outlet to express their deep feelings in a safe environment. They also need awareness of what to do if they know a fellow peer is struggling with mental health. Unfortunately at McMinnville High School our students have experienced the loss of three students to suicide in the past year. For this reason, I believe House Bill 3643 is imperative to bring awareness and support to teen mental health. Let Mikalyn's tragedy be an educational tool for all youth experiencing mental health issues. We need to talk about it. Every youth life matters! (#LLM -Love Like Mikalynn)