



SCOTT ALLEN

REPRESENTATIVE • 97TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

For Immediate Release
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Statement on Suicide Task Force Prevention Bills

Today, Rep. Scott Allen released the following statement on several bills drafted by the Speaker's Task Force on Suicide Prevention:

"Suicide is a serious subject that is deserving of a robust public policy conversation beyond the halls of the state Capitol. The conversation should be taking place in school board meetings, school administration meetings, health association meetings, churches and families.

All efforts to prevent and reduce the incidence of suicide in this state, including the work put in by the Speaker's Task Force on Suicide Prevention, are commendable.

Unfortunately, most of the bills before us this Thursday addressing the issue, follow the classic government pattern of increasing spending and growing government, as if, somehow, that will translate into fewer suicides.

None of the bills specifically address the potential causes or correlating factors behind the recent rise in suicides. Most of the bills do not address policy matters that might influence the correlating factors. We know that in recent times we have a preponderance of new technologies that have captured our attention. Have these added to our stress and reduced our resilience? Can we have policy conversations about the scientific research about the effects of these technologies and how we might better adapt to them?

Do these bills simply provide a mask of compassion and concern that the legislature can wear until next session when the budget requests for the enumerated programs will grow?

Money, or government, cannot solve human social and emotional challenges. Loving people can.

It is a growing and dangerous trend that we expect government to solve issues where people have abdicated themselves of social responsibility.

The bills before us on Thursday are all well-intentioned, and I am grateful to my colleagues for the work they have put in to bring us to this point, however, only one of them, AB531, has earned my support at this time.

Funding some grants may be appropriate, however, in my opinion, the legislative body doesn't have enough information and has not had enough conversation to embrace the task force recommendations at the present."

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The 97th Assembly District includes portions of the City of Waukesha and the Towns of Waukesha, Genesee, and Mukwonago.