

MICROFILM DIVIDER

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SFN 2053 (2/85) 5M



ROLL NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

4032

2007 SENATE HUMAN SERVICES

SCR 4032

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. SCR 4032

Senate Human Services Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: 2-26-07

Recorder Job Number: 3850, 3889

Committee Clerk Signature

Mary K. Mason

Minutes:

Chairman Senator J. Lee opened the hearing on SCR 4032 directing the Legislative Council to study ways in which schools and school districts can better identify high-risk students and provide programs designed to reduce the incidences of high-risk behaviors that can lead to suicide attempts.

Senator Dever (District #32) introduced SCR 4032 which concerns itself with a study of behaviors that lead to suicide attempts by young people. He had a constituent who had a son who committed suicide. This is simply a call for the legislature to study this issue. A lot of good things are happening through the school systems and other organizations. If there are things the legislature could do to put policies or programs in place that would help alleviate that, it would be a good thing.

Mark LoMurray testified as a private citizen in support of SCR 4032. He has thirty years of professional work working with teens, about 20 years working with suicide prevention in ND. He helped draft a first national suicide prevention plan and is a co-founder of the suicide prevention task force in 1998. (Attachment #1)

Senator Warner was excited to hear about training the ancillary staff in schools. He asked him to comment a little on the effectiveness of training students to monitor each others behavior. Is it counter productive or is it an important part of the process?

Mr. LoMurray said they've trained approximately 8,000 teens. The approach to that is not that they are responsible for their friends but, what has been found is in about 80% of the teen suicides the peer group knew. They knew about warning signs and didn't tell any adult about it. The code of silence is pretty significant. They have found that when they train groups of teens for an hour, they are not able to make a dent in that code of silence. If they can get them for four hours and ask a group of teen leaders to go out and do some hands on tangible things they have a better chance to break the code of silence. (Meter 16:00) He continued talking about training teen groups.

Senator Dever said he has heard that there is a difference between adults and teenagers, that if an adult threatens to commit suicide they may or may not be serious and if a teenager does you better take them serious.

Mr. LoMurray said they see a lot more impulsive suicides with teens. He continued talking about reasons for suicide.

Senator Erbele asked what the reason the west is so high.

Mr. LoMurray said there are a lot of theories. One is rural states – areas with fairly long winters. Rural areas are considered a mental health low resource area. There are some ethnic issues.

Senator Heckaman – If we were to put some money out to increase these programs in our state, where would we direct the money to?

Mr. LoMurray – Wait till the study is back. It would look at what you are trying to target.

A suggestion in schools would be to train everybody but have more lengthy additional training for the highly empathetic school staff that the teens are already going to go to.

Stephanie Sauers testified on her own behalf in support of SCR 4032. (Attachment #2)

Connie Hildebrand (National Association of Social Workers) testified in support of SCR 4032. (Attachment #3)

Dorcas Kunkel (Director, Suicide Prevention Program, ND Dept. of Health) testified in support of SCR 4032. (Attachment #4)

Senator Dever said he had attended a workshop at United Tribes and they said the best thing that could happen to prevent suicides is to develop a sense of community within the community. Is that the best kind of approach to addressing this situation?

Ms. Kunkel said the broadest suicide prevention efforts would probably be the best. It's a very complex issue and many factors play into it.

Senator Dever – It really comes down to a sense of belonging in the community.

Ms. Kunkel – A sense of belonging and taking away that isolation.

LeAnn Nelson (Director, Professional Development, NDEA) testified in support of SCR 4032.

The study is important, not only for the safety of the particular child but also the safety of others in the path of the child.

Chuck Pulver (Mental Health Association of ND, Public Policy Assistant and Community Education Coordinator for the 211 Health Information and Crisis Line) --The mental health association of ND supports this study resolution. One thing this study can really do is look at all the components that are out there.

There was no opposing or neutral testimony.

Senator J. Lee asked Dorinda Olson (DPI) if they would be able to provide any information about what is currently in place.

Ms. Olson replied that the one comment that comes to her mind over and over again is that even, as humans, when we don't know what to do, we often don't do anything. That is often what happens within a school system as well as in the communities. We don't know what to say, therefore, we say nothing. Silence is often probably the most negative thing that we could do.

The hearing on SCR 4032 was closed.

JOB #3889

Senator J. Lee opened SCR 4032 for discussion.

Senator Warner moved a Do Pass on SCR 4032.

Senator Erbele seconded the motion.

Roll call vote 6-0-0. Carrier is Senator Dever.

Date: 2-23

Roll Call Vote #: 0-1

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 4032

Senate Natural Resources Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken Adopt Amendment

Motion Made By Triplett Seconded By Freborg

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Sen. Stanley Lyson, Chairman			Sen. Joel Heitkamp		
Sen. Ben Tollefson, ViceChairman			Sen. Jim Pomeroy		
Sen. Layton Freborg			Sen. Constance Triplett		
Sen. Herbert Urlacher					

Withdrawn

Total (Yes) _____ No _____

Absent _____

Floor Assignment _____

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

Date: 2-26-07

Roll Call Vote #: 1

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 4032

Senate HUMAN SERVICES Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken Do Pass

Motion Made By Sen. Warner Seconded By Sen. Erbele

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Senator Judy Lee, Chairman	✓		Senator Joan Heckaman	✓	
Senator Robert Erbele, V. Chair	✓		Senator Jim Pomeroy	✓	
Senator Dick Dever	✓		Senator John M. Warner	✓	

Total (Yes) 6 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Senator Dever

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
February 26, 2007 4:13 p.m.

Module No: SR-36-3939
Carrier: Dever
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SCR 4032: Human Services Committee (Sen. J. Lee, Chairman) recommends DO PASS
(6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SCR 4032 was placed on the
Eleventh order on the calendar.

2007 HOUSE EDUCATION

SCR 4032

2007 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. **SCR 4032**

House Education Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: **14 March 2007**

Recorder Job Number: **5048**

Committee Clerk Signature

Jan Prindle

Minutes:

Chairman Kelsch opened the hearing of SCR 4032.

Senator Dick Dever, District 32, sponsor, introduced the bill. I was asked to sponsor this resolution by a constituent. SAMSA is a national organization that surveys high school and middle school students. The results of their survey show what students think about themselves and for purposes of this resolution: suicide. It is concerning to me. I brought this resolution to call for a study of risk behaviors that lead to suicide. In 2005, 15% of high school students and 14% of 7th and 8th graders reported that they had considered suicide, 12% of high school students and 8% of 7th and 8th graders reported that they had planned a suicide, 6% of high school students and 5% of 7th and 8th graders reported that they had attempted suicide. I know that there are a lot of things being done on a lot of different levels to address this issue particularly in our schools, but I don't think the Legislature has ever really considered it. I am the sole sponsor of this resolution for a couple of reasons. One, I was up against the deadline, but the other is that to emphasis the point that I think a lot of people think of suicide to be singular act and the person who does it is responsible for the action and nobody else is involved. If we are talking about an adult suicide that's probably true; but when we talk about teenagers there are relationships or other people that are aware of the thoughts going through somebody else's mind. We see kind of an epidemic; we see copy cat kinds of activities and I

think it's something that we should as a Legislature take a good look at and see how we can improve situations in our school system.

Stephanie Sours, testified in favor of the bill. (Testimony Attached.)

Chairman Kelsch: Just a comment. I didn't know your son Chance, but we see plenty of vehicles around that have a little memorial to Chance and I even saw one or two in Fargo so I'm very familiar with what you are talking about. Thank you for sharing your story.

Mark LoMurray, testified in favor of the bill. (Testimony Attached.)

Representative Mueller: We have among the highest teen suicides in the country. Is there any explanation for that?

LoMurray: There are a lot of theories about that. I think what we see when we look at the fact that we have a high binge drinking rate in ND—there's strong correlation between drug and alcohol use and teen suicide impulsivity. We're an extremely rural state. Ninety percent of our state is considered a mental health shortage area so getting access to services is one thing. We have long winters. We have some seasonal affect from that. If we would look at 80 – 85% of fatalities tend to be males and we would look at some of our ethnic groups and that would be Scandinavian, German and Northern Plains Tribes. Men in that group tend to be a pretty reserved group and tend to hold things in sometimes. I think there are a lot of issues there. I don't think anyone has the magic answer. I would say that what we've found is it takes more than the mental health folks—it takes community involvement. Where we feel that we have made a dent it's been in getting schools involved, in getting faith communities and cultural groups and teen leaders and parents and those efforts that involve communities seem to be fairly effective and hopeful.

Representative Mueller: Miss Sours spoke of a group that her son unfortunately became involved in. Is there any mechanism in the system to follow up on that group to go in a try to

find out what's happening with a group like that because obviously there were some pretty destructive results from Chance's involvement with that group?

LoMurray: Quite honestly that differs from region to region and from community to community. Almost always I would say the follow up is dependent on how active a post prevention crisis team is and how aggressive they are willing to be about going after a group like that. In a lot of communities we find key individuals and it doesn't necessarily mean somebody in a hospital setting or a mental health worker. A lot of times it might be some pastors or youth ministers or some street outreach type workers that might really pursue a group like that. Quite often the reality is a lot of times that's left a pretty hidden mess. A group like that would be considered very much a concern and very high risk and you certainly would want to activate and see if you can get people to have some caring conversations at the very least and maybe some very interventions. The systems are really not in place to be quite honest.

Representative Wall: I support your very important work. Do you meet resistance in some communities with suicide education? They would rather not talk about it because it would bring it to light and there would be an increase. Is that something?

LoMurray: We have a lot of taboos around suicide particularly in school systems. As we talk with administration on the superintendent level we have a conversation in that they want to make sure we're not going to do more harm. Lots of time there is an underlying belief that let's just not have to talk about this too much because it might put that idea. I think there are some significant things there and we want to make sure that if we are doing suicide prevention issues, it really needs to be in a healthful, hopeful way. We need to be talking about where help comes from and where you get resources in a very, very positive way. You can do damage if you come in and go at this in the wrong way. I do think we have learned a lot and

that is the thing that we want to make sure that we are doing education and using models that are effective, that are safe and that are going to make a difference.

Representative Hunskor: Do you know if at the collegiate level in training teachers is there any emphasis in the curriculum that would address this? Secondly, is there anything being done in in-service in schools to help teachers prepare to recognize this?

LoMurray: We have talked to a variety of colleges and universities as to how they train on suicide, particularly for teachers. Our group has done a fair amount of teacher in-service training. I think almost always they really appreciate that especially if you can break it down to nuts and bolts and here are some things to watch for; but not just for suicidal youth, but if you see a youth in distress being able to make a connection and helping schools think through some ways to do that and also how we can partner and develop teen leaders in a way that is going to be effective. Those teens who will hear about friends in distress before any of the teachers will and they are the ones that will link up with the strong and supportive teachers. You are going to go to folks you have a relationship with and then those adults help make a connection to the system.

Vice Chairman Meier: Let's take for example, Bismarck School District. In the tragedy of a suicide of one of their students, what do they do at the school?

LoMurray: They have a crisis team in place made up by school system staff as well as some of folks outside of the schools system. There usually is some response to that. They decide how large a crisis they have and bring folks into the school to sit and talk with students. Many times I've been part of the situation where we come in and not only talk to students but after school or during school we're talking to staff as well if they have been affected or traumatized and are struggling with what's happened. It's very hard for the teachers and staff if they lose

one of their students as well so many times they need support in talking about this and what they should be doing to handle things in their classroom or after school.

Vice Chairman Meier: Is there a team that does initial and long term follow up?

LoMurray: That's one of the issues that traditionally with post intervention is there is a lot of activity within that first week. One of the things that we have certainly encouraged is a little bit more long term follow up especially with deeply affected friends, family and other youth that maybe don't know that person that well but they have been through some things that all of sudden that triggers a lot of issues for them. We really try to promote a model that encourages some of those folks that are already in some relationships with them to keep following up, doing some mentoring, having some conversations and making those referrals to mental health services so they know who and where to go with that.

Representative Hanson: Suicides are quite high on the reservations. Are there any ongoing studies on the reservation now by the federal government?

LoMurray: There's a variety of things that are happening. Standing Rock and Islaws (?) as well as the ND Health Department have received SAMSA grant through Garret Lee Smith and Dorcas Kunkal the project director is here and will probably speak to that. Built in to that there is some evaluation and that's going to be a bit more on a community wide level. They are using some wraparound strategies and some tracking strategies that they are trying to take a look at that I know of and they are trying to take a look at say at Standing Rock. We have some different things. Some things seem to be fairly hopeful. They have done some effective work with some screening tools as well as following up with small support groups any referrals they get when they screen. I think they screen 5th through 12th graders twice a year. They seem to use that fairly effectively at Four Winds. They would be one model to take a look at.

Dorcas Kunkel, director of the Suicide Prevention Program for the ND Department of Health, testified in support of the bill. (Testimony Attached.)

Chet Pulver, public policy assistant with the ND Mental Health Association, testified in favor of the bill. (Testimony Attached.) I am also involved in the crisis line—the community education coordinator. It's run by the mental health association. In 2006 we received 327 calls related to suicide. That was folks were in the act, folks who were contemplating, or folks that were concerned about family members. Having just lost a family member to suicide I've also seen what it does to families.

Vice Chairman Meier: When you receive a call you are concerned about do you send somebody out, or track the call or ??

Pulver: We're certified with the American Association of Suicide ___?___ and there are protocols and policies that we follow. It depends on some indicators in the call and we can through the state radio do a track and trace and we have done that to call law enforcement to welfare check on someone. There is a confidentiality issue and there are protocols.

Connie Hildebrand, representing the National Association of Social Workers, ND Chapter, testified in favor of the bill. We testified in favor of this bill on the Senate side and we also offer our support on the House side as well. In addition to the risk factors we find out there are a number of skill techniques that can be taught and be helpful to young people in terms of being able to prevent these kinds of things. One of the things I would mention is conflict management skill teaching.

Nancy Sands, ND Education Association, testified in favor of the bill. We too are in support of this. NDEA takes this issue very seriously. We have provided workshops for our members and school support people on this. A number of years ago AAEW, put out a publication that talked about harassment. The students reported that it most often takes place

in the hallways. They need to be comfortable in reporting to people that can do something about it. We know that there is a tremendous amount of pressure on young people to belong and to feel they are part of a group. When that is lacking, then some of these issues come forward and we have results that we don't want. I hope this resolution will pass and we'll be happy to be part of the study group.

Mary Wahl, representing the ND Council of Education Leaders, testified in favor of the bill. During the testimony you heard this morning I know there have been at least 100 students who have been in the room and rotated through the room. If the information as provided you in this study is accurate, 15 of those 100 students would have considered suicide and 12 of those 100 students would have planned a suicide. That's assuming that they are typical of those that were in this study. When you think of it like that, it really does hit home.

We all need to do a better job of taking care of our kids and this one area where we can focus and hopefully make a difference. We think this study will help and as a by product of the study, we would like to think that school environment in general may improve. Even for kids who are not necessarily driven to suicidal tendencies, life is not always as good as it could be for them in the school environment and we'd like to think that even as study the issue of suicide that we may improve our school environment for all of our kids.

Representative Mueller: Mary, the resolution that we have before us specifically speaks to teachers and counselors. If I'm hearing the testimony correctly, I wonder if we ought not to amend in "all school staff and personnel." Does that make sense?

Wahl: I think that would be a good addition. We've heard some testimony with regard to training of cooks and janitors because kids have relationships with those people too. Those people can be very sensitive to changes that they perceive happening in their kids. That would be an excellent addition.

Jim Bartlett, executive director of the Home School Association, testified in favor of the bill. I'm also on a group called the Bottineau Area Christian Ministerial Association and we first learned of the youth health risk survey results a year ago we began meeting each month to discuss what the clergy could do for the Bottineau area schools. We also met with the school principals and superintendents last September to discuss these results including suicide results and I have a few comments that came out of our discussions. One of them from the Bottineau HS principal mentioned that when he was in school, the peer pressure was 20% bad and 80% good and the way he summarized it today he said it was 80% bad and 20% good. He was open to ideas that would help. As a parent and a person concerned about education of children in general I want to mention something that hasn't been brought up. That is the idea that actions come from thoughts and philosophies that drive those thoughts. In our public schools today we have some guiding principals that are operating in our school system that are not generally looked at as a cause of the actions or the problems. Secondary humanism is a defined world view of defined origin. That is the only religion taught in the public schools today and that essentially promotes theological atheism. Atheism is where you have no God. If you have no God you have no accountability so suicide becomes an option. It also promotes philosophical naturalism—an idea that all is here is what you see and there is no such thing as a spiritual world. Biological, spontaneous generation, evolution ideas are promoted so some people say we came from you to you by way of the zoo. Basically it takes out a personal God and the creation process and leaves people without hope. Also, moral relativism so that what is good for you is good for you but I have a different idea and my truth is my truth and your truth is your truth. This relativism is also a reason for the hopelessness of children today. Legal positivism where you make laws based what you can do and basically produce the freedom that we had in America. We see very little suicides in the home school

movement. In talking with other folks here, we couldn't think of any examples of suicide in home school families. We would like to support the study because I think it needs to be studied—it's important. I would like to encourage you to include a philosophical discussion besides the practical. That's really at the root of the issue.

Vice Chairman Meier closed the hearing of SCR 4032.

Representative Haas: We had a brief discussion about adding on line 18 "all school staff"
I so move.

Representative Hanson: I second.

A voice vote was taken: The amendment was accepted.

Vice Chairman Meier: I Move Do Pass as Amended and Place on the Consent Calendar.

Representative Herbel: I second.

A voice vote was taken: Passed Unanimously.

Representative Meier will carry the bill.

Date: 14 May 07
Roll Call Vote #: 1

2007 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 4039

House Education Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken Line 18 add "all school staff"

Motion Made By Haas Seconded By Hanson

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Kelsch			Rep Hanson		
V Chairman Meier			Rep Hunskor		
Rep Haas			Rep Mueller		
Rep Herbel			Rep Myxter		
Rep Johnson			Rep Solberg		
Rep Karls					
Rep Sukut					
Rep Wall					

Total Yes _____ No _____

Absent _____

Floor Assignment _____

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

Carried

Date: 14 May 07
 Roll Call Vote #: 2

2007 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1032

House Education Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken do pass as amended + place

Motion Made By Meier Seconded By Herbel Consett

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Kelsch			Rep Hanson		
V Chairman Meier			Rep Hunskor		
Rep Haas			Rep Mueller		
Rep Herbel			Rep Myxter		
Rep Johnson			Rep Solberg		
Rep Karls					
Rep Sukut					
Rep Wall					

Total Yes 13 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Meier

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SCR 4032: Education Committee (Rep. R. Kelsch, Chairman) recommends AMENDMENTS AS FOLLOWS and when so amended, recommends DO PASS and BE PLACED ON THE CONSENT CALENDAR (13 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SCR 4032 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

Page 1, line 18, replace the first "and" with a comma and after "counselors" insert ", and all other school staff"

Renumber accordingly

2007 TESTIMONY

SCR 4032

Public Testimony for Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 4032
Sixtieth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota
Introduced by Senator Dever

Testimony by Mark LoMurray, LSW
15506 Sundown Drive
Bismarck, ND 58503
outreach@btinet.net
701-471-7186

I would like to provide testimony in support of Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 4032 directing the Legislative Council to study ways in which schools and school districts can better identify high-risk students and provide programs designed to reduce the incidences of high-risk behaviors that can lead to suicide attempts.

I am testifying as a private citizen with thirty years experience working with teen's professionally in North Dakota and over twenty years experience in the field of suicide prevention. I was one of 14 North Dakotans involved in the development of the first national suicide prevention plan and am the co-founder of the North Dakota Adolescent Suicide Prevention Task Force founded in 1998, and co-chair of this group from 2000-2005. I've been the project director with the Mental Health Association for the North Dakota Adolescent Suicide Prevention Project from 2000-2006, which has trained over 50,000 North Dakotans. In 2005 the project was chosen as the national winner of the Public Health Practice award by the American Public Health Association, Epidemiology Section. I began working primarily on teen suicide prevention through crisis intervention, when as the Director of the Police Youth Bureau in the mid-1990 I attended over 30 teen funerals in less than three years, half of which were teen suicides. I left the Police Youth Bureau convinced that we could do better and get in front of this growing danger of teen suicide. For the past nine years, twenty some grants later, I continue to work on teen suicide and teen risk issues, with the majority of my time spent in partnership with tribal and rural communities.

I consider this resolution an extremely important one for the health of North Dakota teens for the following reasons. The need is clearly stated by the statistics in the resolution taken from the 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey for North Dakota, but needs to be highlighted by the following longstanding fact.

- Suicide is the #2 cause of death for young people ages 10-24 years old in North Dakota.

In 1998, when in North Dakota we began our first efforts on a state suicide prevention plan, North Dakota was ranked the #2 highest state per 100,000 rate for suicide fatalities for 10-14 year olds, #6 highest state per 100,000 rate for suicide fatalities for 15-19 year olds. We had strong evidence closely linking teen suicide with other risk factors particularly depression, substance abuse, exposure to traumatic events, harassment

