

September 3, 2020

Governor Gavin Newsom
1303 10th St., Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814



SUBJECT: Requesting signature on AB 2112 (Ramos)

Via email to: leg.unit@gov.ca.gov

Dear Governor Newsom,

On behalf of California Youth Empowerment Network, I respectfully request your signature on AB 2112, a bill that creates a statewide Office of Suicide Prevention within the Department of Public Health to study and address the crisis of suicide.

The California Youth Empowerment Network (CAYEN) engages, empowers, represents and is led by Transitional Age Youth (TAY) in mental health advocacy that directly affects TAY. Since CAYEN's inception in 2006, CAYEN has taken many forms of action to empower TAY in their personal lives and spark progressive change in public policy. Throughout the legislative process, CAYEN has advocated in support of AB 2112.

Even before the current COVID-19 pandemic, suicide rates among all groups had been increasing drastically. Now, this mental health crisis has grown significantly under the weight of isolation and uncertainty. The state has a responsibility to focus resources on this crisis to ensure that these conditions do not worsen in the coming months and years.

Currently, there exists a patchwork of state and local suicide prevention resources and programs. Between schools, cities, county Departments of Behavioral Health and the state, a variety of practices and programs are utilized to support suicide prevention efforts. This presents an important problem: no one institution can identify best practices and dispense recommendations both to local agencies and statewide.

AB 2112 takes a vital step in addressing the crisis of suicide by coordinating state resources into a statewide Office of Suicide Prevention. This Office will devote resources to studying this crisis, make recommendations to the legislature, and advise on best practices to ensure that statewide resources are used to properly affect the crisis. By creating a statewide Office of Suicide Prevention, the state can target specific populations with greatest suicide risk to begin to address the root causes of the crisis.

For the reasons outlined, I urge you to support AB 2112 and sign the bill into law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Heidi L. Strunk".

Heidi L. Strunk
President & CEO
CAYEN is a program of Mental Health America of California

www.CA-YEN.org