

Evidence-Based Youth Suicide Prevention Act of 2026

H.R. 8989 Rep. Brittany Pettersen (D-CO) & Rep. Rudy Yakym III (R-IN)

Youth suicide is a national crisis, and families, schools, and communities need better tools to help prevent it. In 2023, suicide was the second-leading cause of death for young people ages 10–14 and 15–24.¹ CDC data also show that nearly 40 percent of high school students reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, one in five seriously considered attempting suicide, and nearly one in ten attempted suicide.²

Schools and community organizations are often where warning signs first emerge and where young people can be reached early, yet local leaders lack resources to identify, test, and scale effective prevention strategies.

The **Evidence-Based Youth Suicide Prevention Act of 2026** would help communities protect young people by establishing a new Youth Suicide Prevention Demonstration Pilot Program at the Department of Health and Human Services. The program would support schools, states, Tribes, community partners and youth-serving organizations in implementing and evaluating practical, evidence-based approaches to prevent youth suicide and mental health crises.

The **Youth Suicide Prevention Demonstration Pilot Program** would:

- **Support local youth suicide prevention efforts** by funding schools, states, Tribes, community organizations, and youth-serving partners to develop, implement, and scale prevention strategies;
- **Help communities use proven approaches** by prioritizing interventions with stronger evidence while also supporting promising strategies that need further rigorous evaluation;
- **Reach young people where they are** by supporting prevention efforts in schools and community settings that students and families already trust;
- **Strengthen technical assistance and outcome measurement** so grantees can implement programs effectively, track results, and improve services over time;
- **Build the evidence base for what works** by helping policymakers and communities identify which youth suicide prevention strategies are most effective, for whom, and in which settings.

The Evidence-Based Youth Suicide Prevention Act of 2026 would help ensure federal resources are focused on what works: preventing youth suicide, strengthening community capacity, and giving young people the support they need before a crisis becomes a tragedy.

¹ National Institute of Mental Health (2025). Suicide Statistics. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide>

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2022). Youth Risk Behavior Survey. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthy-youth/mental-health/mental-health-numbers.html>