

1 State of Arkansas  
2 90th General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2015  
4

As Engrossed: H3/17/15

# A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1887

5 By: Representatives Lemons, Baltz, Bentley, Bragg, Copeland, Cozart, Davis, D. Ferguson, C. Fite, L.  
6 Fite, Gates, Gossage, M. Gray, Hammer, Harris, Henderson, Jean, Jett, Johnson, Love, Lowery, Magie,  
7 Richey, Richmond, Rushing, Shepherd, B. Smith, Sorvillo, Speaks, Sturch, Tosh, Vines  
8 By: Senator E. Williams  
9

## For An Act To Be Entitled

11 AN ACT TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING SUICIDE  
12 PREVENTION; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.  
13  
14

### Subtitle

15 TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING SUICIDE  
16 PREVENTION.  
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20 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
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22 *SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 20, Chapter 45, is amended to add an*  
23 *additional subchapter to read as follows:*  
24

25 *Subchapter 3 -- Arkansas Suicide Prevention Council*

26  
27 *20-45-301. Findings and intent.*

28 *(a) The General Assembly finds that:*

29 *(1) Five hundred sixteen (516) Arkansans died by suicide in*  
30 *2013, making suicide the leading cause of injury death in Arkansas and that*  
31 *suicide is an urgent and serious public health and welfare problem in the*  
32 *state;*

33 *(2) Arkansas needs a comprehensive and coordinated approach to*  
34 *prevent suicide across all age and demographic groups in all areas of the*  
35 *state and to ensure that suicide prevention becomes a shared priority for all*  
36 *citizens;*



1           (3) Statewide coordination of suicide prevention efforts is  
2 necessary to ensure high levels of collaborative leadership, effectiveness,  
3 and continuous improvement;

4           (4) An effective, evidence-based strategy is necessary to  
5 increase knowledge about and access to suicide prevention, intervention, and  
6 postintervention resources for all Arkansans;

7           (5) Intentional leadership, survivor input, and capacity-  
8 building, policy development, and alignment of services for high-risk sectors  
9 are needed;

10           (6) A seamless system of support and follow-up coordination for  
11 suicide attempt survivors and situationally high-risk individuals is needed;

12           (7) The rate of suicide in Arkansas is presently out-pacing the  
13 nation and increasing year to year; and

14           (8) The absence of a suicide prevention program authority in  
15 Arkansas is a major threat to public health and welfare.

16           (b) It is the intent of the General Assembly that the Injury  
17 Prevention Division of the Department of Health be designated the program  
18 authority to receive and solicit funding as appropriate to provide adequate  
19 funding in support of an effective and staffed statewide suicide prevention  
20 program.

21  
22           20-45-302. Creation and purpose.

23           (a) There is established the "Arkansas Suicide Prevention Council".

24           (b) The purpose of the council is to serve as a central body on  
25 suicide prevention efforts across the state, including without limitation:

26           (1) Setting priorities for statewide, data-driven, evidence-  
27 based, and clinically-informed suicide prevention in Arkansas;

28           (2) Providing a public forum to examine the current status of  
29 suicide prevention and intervention policies, priorities, and practices;

30           (3) Identifying interested parties, community, state, and  
31 national prevention providers and stakeholders for collaboration and devising  
32 a system of gathering data and other information to ensure coordination of  
33 suicide prevention resources and services throughout Arkansas;

34           (4) Assisting private, nonprofit, and faith-based entities,  
35 including without limitation coalitions, foundations, initiatives, churches,  
36 veterans groups, substance abuse recovery groups, senior adult organizations,

1 *grief support groups, injury prevention groups, and other groups to enhance*  
2 *suicide prevention and survivor support efforts; and*

3 *(5) Aiding in the development of evaluation tools and data*  
4 *collection for use in reporting suicide prevention efforts to the public.*

5 *(c) Within sixty (60) days of the effective date of this act, there*  
6 *shall be appointed to the council no more than twenty-three (23) members,*  
7 *including:*

8 *(1) A representative of the Office of the Attorney General, to*  
9 *be designated by the Attorney General;*

10 *(2) A representative of the Division of Behavioral Health*  
11 *Services of the Department of Health, to be designated by the head of the*  
12 *Division of Behavioral Health Services;*

13 *(3) A representative of the Department of Education, to be*  
14 *designated by the Director of the Department of Education;*

15 *(4) A representative of the Division of Youth Services of the*  
16 *Department of Health, to be designated by the head of the Division of Youth*  
17 *Services;*

18 *(5) A representative of Arkansas Children's Hospital, to be*  
19 *designated by the Director of Arkansas Children's Hospital;*

20 *(6) A representative of law enforcement, to be designated by*  
21 *Director of the Department of Arkansas State Police;*

22 *(7) A representative from higher education, to be designated by*  
23 *the Director of the Department of Higher Education;*

24 *(8) A representative from kindergarten through grade twelve (K-*  
25 *12) education, to be designated by the Arkansas Education Association;*

26 *(9) A representative from an employee assistance program or*  
27 *human resources in the private sector, to be designated by the Governor;*

28 *(10) A licensed mental health professional, to be designated by*  
29 *the Governor;*

30 *(11) A representative of substance-abuse treatment providers, to*  
31 *be designated by the Governor;*

32 *(12) A representative of primary medical care providers, to be*  
33 *designated by the Governor;*

34 *(13) A representative of first responders, to be designated by*  
35 *the Governor;*

36 *(14) A representative from a hospital with an on-site emergency*

1 department, to be designated by the Governor;

2 (15) A hospital-based social worker, to be designated by the  
3 Governor;

4 (16) An elected coroner, to be designated by the Governor;

5 (17) An active member or veteran of any branch of the United  
6 States military, to be designated by the Governor;

7 (18) A family member of a person who died by suicide, to be  
8 designated by the Governor;

9 (19) A person who has attempted suicide, recovered, and is now  
10 thriving, to be designated by the Governor;

11 (20) A representative of the suicide prevention nonprofit  
12 community, to be designated by the Governor;

13 (21) A representative of the Arkansas Prevention Network, to be  
14 designated by the Director of the Arkansas Prevention Network;

15 (22) A representative from an interfaith organization, to be  
16 designated by the Governor; and

17 (23) The Chair of the Arkansas Youth Suicide Prevention Task  
18 Force, or his or her designee.

19 (d) The council shall elect annually two (2) cochairs, a vice chair,  
20 and a secretary who will serve as an executive board.

21 (e)(1) The council shall establish a charter and bylaws within ninety  
22 (90) days of the first meeting.

23 (2) A quorum for conducting business is one-half (1/2) of the  
24 appointed members.

25 (f)(1) The council shall meet at least four (4) times each year.

26 (2) The council shall meet at times and  
27 places that the co-chairs deem necessary, but no meeting shall be held  
28 outside the state.

29 (3) Special meetings may be held at the call of the co-chairs,  
30 as needed.

31 (g)(1) The appointed members of the council shall serve staggered  
32 terms of four (4) years with no more than two (2) contiguous terms.

33 (2) If a vacancy occurs in an appointed position, the vacancy  
34 shall be filled for the unexpired term by an appointment made in the same  
35 manner as the original appointment.

36 (h) Appointments shall:

