Legislation Text

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Recognizing September 10, 2025, as Suicide Prevention Day in the City of Philadelphia, and affirming the need for suicide prevention awareness and robust mental health services.

WHEREAS, World Suicide Prevention Day is a worldwide commitment and action to prevent suicides, to raise awareness about suicide warning signs, to advocate for suicide prevention services, to reduce the stigma associated with suicide, and to support those who have attempted suicide; and

WHEREAS, The triennial theme for World Suicide Prevention Day for 2024-2026 is "Changing the Narrative on Suicide" with the call to action "Start the Conversation". This theme aims to raise awareness about the importance of reducing stigma and encouraging open conversations to prevent suicides. Changing the narrative on suicide is about transforming how we perceive this complex issue and shifting from a culture of silence and stigma to one of openness, understanding, and support; and

WHEREAS, Suicide is an extremely complex, but preventable, health issue that requires compassion, empathy, trust, understanding, and access to professional services; and

WHEREAS, According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 48,433 Americans died by suicide in 2018 and the number is continuing to rise, making it the 10th leading causes of death in the nation overall; and

WHEREAS, Placing too much emphasis on hospitalizations can alienate individuals seeking support. When someone expresses suicidal thought, hospitalization should only be utilized when a crisis cannot be managed through community support. Alternative methods to hospitalization must be explored to intervene earlier, prevent suicide attempts, decrease the stigma surrounding suicidality, and increase feelings of safety; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia is taking active steps to combat suicide. The Philadelphia Suicide Prevention Task Force, spearheaded by the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disability Services, is harnessing innovative and person-centered approaches to achieve its goal of zero suicides in our City; and

WHEREAS, Between 2000 and 2018, national suicide rates increased by 30 percent. In Philadelphia, age-standardized rates for suicide are lower than Pennsylvania and the United States for the past five years. For example, in 2020 age-standardized suicide rates were 13.5 for the nation, 12.6 for Pennsylvania, and 10.13 for Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, According to the Philadelphia Suicide Prevention Task Force, there are an average of three deaths by suicides each week in Philadelphia, accounting for 147 lives in 2019; and

WHEREAS, Although the City of Philadelphia has a lower mortality rate than the national rate of deaths by suicide, one suicide is one too many; and

WHEREAS, Suicide prevention is especially vital among younger generations. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide is the second leading cause of death among people ages 10 to 34. In 2017, 10-15% of Philadelphia youth reported either thinking about suicide or having previously attempted; and

WHEREAS, According to the Congressional Black Caucus, suicide prevalence has risen sharply for Black youth. Between 1991 and 2017, suicide attempts rose 73% for Black youth. In the same time, injuries resulting from suicide attempts rose 122% for young black males; and

WHEREAS, According to the Trevor Project, young people who identify as LGBTQ+ are almost five times as likely to have attempted suicide as compared to their heterosexual counterparts; and

WHEREAS, In 2021, the CDC reported that 42% of all high school aged youth in the US experienced "persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness" but that same year, almost 70% of LGBQ+ youth reported experiencing this, twice that of non-LGBTQ+ youth (35%); and

WHEREAS, Organizations across Philadelphia, such as Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Thomas Jefferson University, Einstein Medical Center, University of Pennsylvania, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Greater Philadelphia Chapter, It Gets Better, and others have been pivotal in equipping City residents with transformative and potentially life-saving mental health supports and services; and

WHEREAS, The culture of acceptance and compassion that makes the Philadelphia the City of Brotherly Love and Sisterly Affection must fuel our efforts to prevent suicide and to support our friends and neighbors; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby declares recognizing September 10, 2025 as Suicide Prevention Day in the City of Philadelphia, and affirming the need for suicide prevention awareness and robust mental health services.