
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 25 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY ISAACSON, CIRESI, GILLEN, KAZEEM, MADDEN, PARKER,
SANCHEZ AND SCHLOSSBERG, MARCH 8, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, MARCH 8, 2023

A RESOLUTION

1 Establishing a task force to study social media platforms and
2 websites on which suicide is encouraged.

3 WHEREAS, Every suicide is an avoidable tragedy; and

4 WHEREAS, Suicide rates have risen in the United States over
5 the past 20 years, from 10.4 deaths per 100,000, with a total of
6 29,350 deaths, in 2000, to 13.5 deaths per 100,000, with 45,979
7 deaths, in 2020; and

8 WHEREAS, Suicides have risen in nearly every American age
9 cohort, but especially among those 15 to 24 years of age, with a
10 45% increase since 2009; and

11 WHEREAS, Over the past several years, web forums have been
12 established where individuals discuss and encourage suicide; and

13 WHEREAS, These websites can be easily accessed through online
14 search engines; and

15 WHEREAS, Forty-five individuals have been confirmed to have
16 killed themselves after accessing one particular suicide forum;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, One of these suicide victims was a Pennsylvania

1 resident; and

2 WHEREAS, The House of Representatives has an interest in
3 preventing suicide through policy in order to promote the health
4 and well-being of Pennsylvanians; and

5 WHEREAS, It is important that websites on which suicide is
6 encouraged are studied to determine what actions the
7 Commonwealth can take to prevent suicides stemming from these
8 websites; and

9 WHEREAS, There are a series of complications in regulating
10 websites on which suicide is encouraged, including:

11 (1) freedom of expression concerns, as several state
12 courts have found that encouraging others to commit suicide
13 is protected speech under the First Amendment; and

14 (2) the server for such websites moving frequently among
15 various jurisdictions to avoid government interference;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, The House of Representatives desires advice on
18 legislation from a wide range of sources on how to regulate
19 social media platforms and websites on which suicide is
20 encouraged; therefore be it

21 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives establish a task
22 force to study social media platforms and websites on which
23 suicide is encouraged; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the task force be comprised of the following
25 members:

26 (1) the Attorney General, as chair of the task force;

27 (2) the Secretary of Health, or a designee;

28 (3) the Secretary of Human Services, or a designee;

29 (4) the chairperson and minority chairperson of the

30 Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives, or their

1 designees;

2 (5) the chairperson and minority chairperson of the
3 Health Committee of the House of Representatives, or their
4 designees;

5 (6) the chairperson and minority chairperson of the
6 Human Services Committee of the House of Representatives, or
7 their designees;

8 (7) two clinical psychologists with experience working
9 with suicidal patients, appointed by the Governor;

10 (8) two experts in cyberbullying, appointed by the
11 Governor; and

12 (9) two suicide prevention advocates, appointed by the
13 Governor;

14 and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That the task force issue a report within two years
16 of the adoption of this resolution with recommendations for
17 legislative and executive actions to prevent individuals from
18 committing suicide after visiting online forums on which suicide
19 is encouraged.