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August 31, 2016

The Honorable Jerry Brown  
Governor of California  
State Capitol, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2246 (O'Donnell) Pupil suicide prevention policies**  
**AAP-CA Position: Support**

Dear Governor Brown:

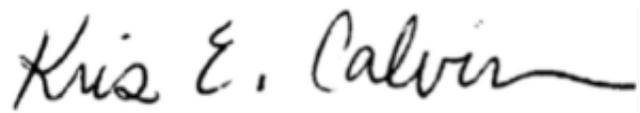
The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing 5,000 California pediatricians strongly supports AB 2246 (O'Donnell). This bill would require middle and high school governing bodies to adopt a policy on pupil suicide prevention that specifically addresses the needs of high-risk groups before the beginning of the 2017-18 school year. The policy would be developed in consultation with school and community stakeholders, school-employed mental health professionals, and suicide prevention experts.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for 15 through 24 year-olds, according to the Center for Disease Control. Reports have also shown that 17% of high school students have seriously considered attempting suicide, and 8% had actually attempted suicide. Students who are at higher risk of suicide include lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) students, foster care children, and students with disabilities, mental health or substance abuse disorders. Symptoms of depression and suicidal intent are often subtle and only recognizable over an extended period. School personnel who interact with children and teens every day are especially well positioned to observe these symptoms and intervene. One national survey found that a teacher is the first person a pupil would turn to for helping a friend who might be suicidal. Having a supportive adult to talk to can significantly reduce the risk of suicide in children and teens. AB 2246 would help to lower suicide rates by ensuring that schools have sufficient resources to help students who show signs of suicidal intent, including suicide prevention training for teachers.

The AAP-CA strongly supports initiatives that address the medical and psychiatric needs of the suicidal adolescent. As pediatricians, we endorse the creation of a policy on pupil suicide prevention in middle and high schools. By requiring school districts to adopt prevention policies with an emphasis on the needs of high-risk students, AB 2246 would help reduce suicide rates in children and teens.

Pediatricians, therefore, respectfully urge you to sign AB 2246 and thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kris E. Calvin" with a long, sweeping underline.

Kris Calvin  
Chief Executive Officer  
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

CC: Stuart Cohen, AAP-CA Chair; Lydia Bourne, AAP-CA Legislative Advocate; AAP-CA Leadership