



March 7, 2018

The Honorable Benjamin Allen.
Chair, Senate Education Committee
State Capitol, Room 2083
Sacramento, CA 95814
Fax: (916) 445-7799

**RE: SB 972 (Portantino): Pupil and student health: identification cards: suicide prevention? hotline number
AAP-CA Position: Support**

Dear Senator Allen,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, supports SB 972 (Portantino). This bill would require a public school, including a charter school, or a private school that serves pupils in grades 7-12 and higher education to issue on the back of pupil identification cards a suicide prevention hotline telephone number commencing July 1, 2019.

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) studies show that at least 90% of teens who kill themselves have some type of mental health issue, such as depression, anxiety, drug or alcohol abuse, or a behavioral problem. Other potential issues are difficulties at school or with friends or family. Some teens may have been victims of sexual or physical abuse or be struggling with issues related to sexual identity. Bullying, cyber-bullying and peer pressure have also been linked reasons for suicide.

Recently, the California Department of Education adopted a model youth suicide prevention policy to help educate and train counselors and school employees of the signs of suicidal behavior and mental illness.

SB 972 (Portantino) would expand this policy by providing an easily accessible suicide prevention telephone hotline number on student's identification cards, which will be another necessary resource for potential lifesaving help.

Pediatricians across the state urge you to vote AYE on SB 972 (Portantino). Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kris E. Calvin".

Kris Calvin
Chief Executive Officer, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: Senate Education Committee Members
Office of Honorable Anthony Portantino, California State Senate(Author)
Lydia Bourne, AAP-CA Lobbyist