



April 22, 2019

Assembly Member Reginald Byron Jones-Sawyer
Chair, Committee on Public Safety
1020 N Street, Room 111
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: AB 650 (Low): Homicide and suicide: data
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Assembly Member Jones-Sawyer:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing the over 5,000 board-certified pediatrician members of California AAP Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 statewide, strongly supports proposed legislation AB 650 (Low), which would require that the gender identity and sexual orientation of victims of homicide and suicide be recorded.

Suicide is the third-leading cause of death for 15- to 24-year-olds, and studies have found that LGBTQ youth have levels of suicidal ideation twice as high as those of their cisgender, heterosexual peers. According to news reports, children as young as nine have died by suicide after bullying, harassment or family rejection due to their real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender presentation. Additionally, the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs found an 86% increase in homicides linked to LGBTQ-related hate crimes between 2016 and 2017, with approximately two out of three victims under the age of 35. Both suicide and homicide appear to affect members of the LGBTQ community at disproportionate levels. However, accurate statistics are difficult to obtain because of uneven reporting requirements for sexual orientation and gender identity on death certificates.

AB 650 (Low) would aid efforts to address this crisis by requiring sexual orientation and gender identity be recorded on death certificates of victims of homicide and suicide, improving the quality of data available to researchers and the public, thus enabling them to better identify vulnerable populations.

Pediatricians across the state of California urge an AYE vote on AB 650 (Low). Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of the children, youth, and families of California.

Sincerely,

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

Kris Calvin
Chief Executive Officer
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

Cc: The Honorable Evan Low; AAP-CA Leadership