



American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

Federal Public Policy Priorities

The Public Policy Council recommended the following federal public policy priorities for calendar year 2010 to the AFSP Board of Directors:

- A. Issues on which AFSP/SPAN USA will take a leading role, initiating advocacy and engaging others to support our goals:
 1. Appropriations at the maximum attainable level for Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act (GLSMA)
 2. Strengthening legislation on veterans and military suicide prevention to promote longitudinal research on the rates and causes of military suicide, require better reporting by the Veterans Administration and Department of Defense, develop anti-stigma campaigns, and continue and expand programs to assist service members, returning veterans, and families.
 3. Legislation or other policy directives to encourage National Institutes of Health agencies (such as National Institute of Mental Health, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, and National Institute on Drug Abuse) to invest more substantially in research related to suicide, suicide prevention, and survivors of suicide loss or suicide attempts.

- B. Issues on which AFSP/SPAN USA will take an active supporting role, conducting advocacy in concert with like-minded coalitions:
 1. Appropriations at the maximum attainable level for:
 - a. National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS)
 - b. Suicide Prevention Lifeline
 - c. Support for the Mental Health Liaison Group's Budget & Appropriations Recommendations
 2. Implementation of Mental Health Parity and Health Reform in accordance with our previous priority objectives.
 3. Reauthorization of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (including provisions of the GLSMA) and, if possible, expansions/improvements in the GLSMA with an increase in its authorization level.
 4. Legislation (provision of transportation authorization) to allow the Golden Gate Bridge Authority (and other jurisdictions) to use federal funds for bridge barriers.
 5. Legislation that aims to reduce bullying and cyber-bullying.
 6. Legislation to establish depression centers of excellence (ENHANCED ACT).

The subcommittee also recommends that the Chair's report to the BOD include the following points:

- The order of issues listed under A and B will provide guidance to staff in determining time and effort allocations.
- In addition to the annual priorities, the Washington Office staff will be expected to monitor and keep the Public Policy Council informed about a full range of federal policy developments (legislative and executive) that relate to suicide and suicide prevention.
- In the event that an issue not on the priority list emerges as an important opportunity that may require organizational approval, that issue will be brought to the Public Policy Council for any necessary action.
- Among the issues that have shown such potential are:
 - Legislation to establish a suicide attempt registry and line authority for NVDRS
 - Legislation providing grants for suicide prevention in the workplace
 - Legislation to create Department of Justice grant programs aimed at reducing suicide and suicide attempts in jail, prisons, and boot camps