
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 204 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY O'MARA, SANCHEZ, MADDEN, HOHENSTEIN, RABB,
SCHLOSSBERG, CIRESI, FLEMING, GALLOWAY, D. WILLIAMS, KINSEY,
DELLOSO, ROZZI, CERRATO, STURLA, McNEILL, SCOTT, SCHWEYER,
KAZEEM, GUENST, STRUZZI, FLICK, SHUSTERMAN, MARKOSEK, KHAN,
OTTEN, WEBSTER AND CEPEDA-FREYTIZ, SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

A RESOLUTION

1 Encouraging Pennsylvanians to use sensitive language when
2 discussing suicide.

3 WHEREAS, Suicide is defined as someone taking his or her own
4 life with conscious intent by lethal means such as a firearm,
5 poisoning, suffocation or other self-injury; and

6 WHEREAS, Approximately 1,885 Pennsylvanians died by suicide
7 in 2021; and

8 WHEREAS, The national suicide rate increased by 36% between
9 2000 and 2021; and

10 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's suicide rate is 13.9 per 100,000
11 people; and

12 WHEREAS, Suicide is the eleventh leading cause of death in
13 Pennsylvania; and

14 WHEREAS, Suicide is the second leading cause of death for
15 individuals from 15 to 24 years of age in Pennsylvania; and

16 WHEREAS, Suicide is the third leading cause of death for

1 individuals from 25 to 34 years of age in Pennsylvania; and

2 WHEREAS, Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death for
3 individuals from 35 to 44 years of age in Pennsylvania; and

4 WHEREAS, Suicide is the fifth leading cause of death for
5 individuals from 45 to 54 years of age in Pennsylvania; and

6 WHEREAS, Suicide is the ninth leading cause of death for
7 individuals 55 to 64 years of age in Pennsylvania; and

8 WHEREAS, Suicide is the nineteenth leading cause of death for
9 individuals 65 years of age or older in Pennsylvania; and

10 WHEREAS, In 2021, nearly 60% more Pennsylvanians died by
11 suicide than by homicide; and

12 WHEREAS, Due to the stigma, it is suspected that suicide is
13 generally underreported; and

14 WHEREAS, Prevention, education, advocacy, public policy and
15 community support are keys to addressing suicide stigma; and

16 WHEREAS, The sensitive use of suicide-related language is
17 also essential to eliminating suicide stigma; and

18 WHEREAS, The term "committed suicide" implies a level of
19 criminality while "completed suicide" implies earlier attempts
20 when there may have been none; and

21 WHEREAS, Both terms perpetuate the stigma associated with
22 suicide and are strongly discouraged; and

23 WHEREAS, Using the word "successful" or "failed" to describe
24 suicide is also discouraged; and

25 WHEREAS, "Died by suicide" or "died of suicide" as well as
26 "suicide death" and "fatal suicide behavior" are recommended
27 language; therefore be it

28 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives urge residents of
29 this Commonwealth to utilize sensitive language that does not
30 perpetuate the stigma of suicide or imply criminality when

1 reporting a death by suicide.