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from the Illinois House of Representatives

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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Kifowit Sponsors Law to Prevent Teenage Suicides in Illinois

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – Hoping to prevent future tragedies from occurring, state Rep. Stephanie Kifowit, D-Oswego, is sponsoring legislation to develop a youth suicide awareness and prevention policy with the help of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

“This bill was brought forward by the family of Ann Marie Blaha, a very young Illinoisan who unfortunately committed suicide after a particularly difficult period in her life,” Kifowit said. “Many depressed young people often feel like they have nowhere to turn and its important schools offer these children help.”

The bill comes at a time when suicides among young adults in the US seem to be rising. Though 2014 records are not yet available, in 2013 the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) estimated that per every 100,000 persons in the US, 12.6 citizens took their own lives. During the same year, AFSP estimates that there were 41,149 suicides in the US.

Kifowit’s Senate Bill 1793 establishes protocols for dealing with individuals who show signs of attempting suicide. The protocols include prevention education for staff and students in schools throughout the state. Named Ann Marie’s Law, the measure also includes a requirement for developing a suicide prevention plan for anyone who wants to intervene but does not precisely know how to do so. Every school board would have to adopt a suicide awareness and prevention plan upon the start of the 2015 through 2016 academic year. Kifowit hopes to also give individuals the resources and training on how to interact with a person who is in the process of committing suicide through this legislation.

“One way we can help young people overcome their condition is if we are open about this subject and begin to take steps to address youth suicide,” Kifowit said. “Ann Marie’s Law would give staff and students a blueprint on how to best respond to students showing signs of depression and what they can do to prevent a tragedy from occurring.”

For more information, please contact Kifowit’s constituent service office by phone at [630-585-1308](tel:630-585-1308), by email at Stephanie.Kifowit@att.net, or by visiting www.ILDistrict84.com. For more information on suicide prevention, please visit the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention’s webpage at <https://www.afsp.org/understanding-suicide/facts-and-figures>.

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