

ASSEMBLY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 2293

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 14, 2020

The Assembly Higher Education Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 2293.

Under the “Madison Holleran Suicide Prevention Act,” P.L.2016, c.18 (C.18A:3B-72 et seq.), institutions of higher education are required to have individuals with training and experience in mental health issues who focus on reducing student suicides and attempted suicides available on campus or remotely by telephone or other means for students 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The individuals also work with faculty and staff on ways to recognize the warning signs and risk factors associated with student suicide. This bill amends that law to also require the individuals to work with faculty and staff on recognizing the signs of depression and on the referral of students to crisis hotlines and mental health screenings and to provide annual training on all of these topics.

The bill also provides that a four-year institution of higher education will require all students who serve as resident assistants to receive annual training on the signs of depression, the warning signs and risk factors associated with college student suicide, the referral of students to campus mental health resources, and responding to students in crisis.

This bill also requires institutions to:

- annually conduct a mental health public awareness campaign on campus designed to: provide students with information on depression and suicide; raise awareness about the mental health services available on and off campus; and reduce the stigma associated with seeking mental health services; and
- establish a mental health crisis assessment and response plan to act as the official protocol to be used by campus staff, faculty, and in the case of four-year institutions, resident assistants, to identify, assess, and respond to a student who is experiencing a mental health crisis.