

<Organization Letterhead>

<Date>

The Honorable Patrick O'Donnell  
Assemblymember, 70<sup>th</sup> District  
State Capitol, Room 4166  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2246 (O'Donnell) – SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember O'Donnell,

<Organization name> is pleased to support your AB 2246, which would require school districts to adopt policies to help prevent youth suicide. <Add a sentence about your organization>

This issue is particularly important to us because studies have shown that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning (LGBTQ) youth are up to four times more likely to attempt suicide than their non-LGBTQ peers. Among young people aged 10-24, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, suicide is the second leading cause of death. According to 2015 data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 17% of students in grades 9 to 12 report having seriously considered suicide, and 8% report having attempted suicide one or more times in the past 12 months. Youth bereaved by suicide; youth with disabilities, mental illness, or substance use disorders; youth experiencing homelessness or in out-of-home settings; and LGBTQ youth are at particularly high risk for suicide. Suicide prevention plans need to address these high-risk groups specifically in order to reach them.

In a national survey conducted by The Jason Foundation, the number one person that a student would turn to when trying to help a friend who might be suicidal was a teacher. This bill would require schools to adopt policies to give teachers the tools necessary for suicide awareness and prevention. Research from the Family Acceptance Project has found that LGBTQ youth who have at least one supportive adult can reduce their risk of suicide. Protecting the health and well being of young people is an ethical imperative for all professionals working with students, and suicide prevention policies that take the specific needs of LGBTQ youth into account will empower teachers to become the supportive adults these youth need.

The National Strategy on Suicide Prevention emphasized the importance of a holistic approach that promotes healthy lifestyles, families, and communities. Having a suicide prevention policy in place in all schools with students in grades seven and above is one of the first essential steps in preventing youth suicide, addressing the particular needs of high-risk groups, and establishing this holistic approach in California schools.

For these reasons, <Organization> is pleased to support AB 2246.

Sincerely,

<Name and Title>