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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. In Hawai'i, on average, one person dies by  
2 suicide every two days. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of  
3 death for children between the ages of ten and fourteen and is  
4 the leading cause of death for young people between the ages of  
5 fifteen and twenty-four. In Hawai'i, suicide accounts for  
6 twenty-five per cent of all fatal injuries.

7           Suicide rates vary by area, with neighbor island and rural  
8 communities seeing higher rates than urban areas. For the  
9 period from 2013 to 2015, the statewide suicide rate was 12.9  
10 deaths for every one hundred thousand individuals. For the same  
11 time period, for every one hundred thousand people, the counties  
12 of Hawai'i, Maui, and Kaua'i had 20.4, 15.9, and 14.6 deaths,  
13 respectively. The city and county of Honolulu's suicide rate,  
14 at 10.3 deaths for every one hundred thousand people, was  
15 slightly lower than the state average.

16           According to the state department of health, the percentage  
17 of teenagers in Hawai'i who plan to commit suicide and the



1 percentage of teenagers who attempt suicide are among the  
2 highest in the nation. For the period from 2005 to 2013, the  
3 percentage of high school-aged children with suicide ideation in  
4 Hawai'i ranged from sixteen to twenty per cent. For the same  
5 time period, the percentage of high school-aged children treated  
6 for a suicide attempt never dipped below three per cent.

7 Suicide attempts, like suicide deaths, have harmful,  
8 lasting, and profound impacts on families and communities. For  
9 every person that dies by suicide, more than thirty others  
10 attempt suicide. Therefore, it is important to monitor  
11 hospitals and emergency departments to identify individuals in  
12 need of immediate intervention.

13 The stigma of seeking mental health counseling places  
14 formidable barriers to providing care and support to individuals  
15 in crisis. States across the nation have sought to address this  
16 issue by passing legislation mandating that teachers complete  
17 in-service training in youth suicide awareness and prevention.  
18 In 2007, Tennessee passed the Jason Flatt Act, which required  
19 all educators in the state to complete two hours of youth  
20 suicide awareness and prevention training every year to be



1 licensed to teach. Twenty states have passed variations of the  
2 Jason Flatt Act.

3 The legislature finds that there is a need to increase the  
4 number of individuals in educational institutions, such as  
5 teachers, principals, and school counselors, who are trained to  
6 identify youth at risk of suicide and refer those children to  
7 appropriate services, counseling, and intervention.

8 The purpose of this Act is to require all teachers,  
9 principals, and school counselors to complete two hours of  
10 suicide prevention and education training each year.

11 SECTION 2. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
12 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated  
13 and to read as follows:

14 "§302A- Suicide prevention; in-service training. The  
15 department shall require that in-service training include at  
16 least two hours of suicide prevention education for all  
17 teachers, principals, and school counselors each school year.  
18 This education may be accomplished through the provision and  
19 completion of suicide prevention materials approved by the  
20 department."

21 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.



1 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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# S.B. NO. 691

**Report Title:**

Jason Flatt Act; Suicide Prevention Training; School Personnel

**Description:**

Requires two hours of annual in-service training in suicide prevention for all teachers, principals, and school counselors.

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