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# Assembly California Legislature



**JAMES C. RAMOS**  
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, FORTIETH DISTRICT

**COMMITTEES**  
BUDGET  
HEALTH  
JOBS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,  
AND THE ECONOMY  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
RULES

**SUBCOMMITTEES**  
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 1 ON  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

February 27, 2020

Commissioners  
Mental Health Services Oversight & Accountability Commission  
1325 J Street, Suite 1700  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Commissioners:

Let me begin by thanking you for taking on the significant work of engaging with stakeholders throughout the state to assemble California's statewide plan on suicide prevention and intervention. It was a tremendous undertaking and you should be very proud of the work you accomplished.

It is now my honor to move forward with legislation to fulfill your number one recommendation which is the creation of a California Office of Suicide Prevention and Intervention.

The last line in the dedication of your report, "Striving for Zero, California's Strategic Plan for Suicide Prevention 2020-2025," is: "Lives can be saved. There is hope." Your study is invaluable in helping our state save lives and offer hope. Suicide is a public health concern and brings untold grief to families and communities.

As a California Native American, I am especially grateful that you included us, my community, in your review of the data. We are too often overlooked, but you did not. Thank you. Also, I would be remiss not to thank you for the assistance that the OAC staff has already provided to me. I hope I can continue this partnership as we move the bill forward.

It would be a privilege and honor if you would agree to co-sponsor AB 2112. You would be joining another wonderful sponsor, the California Alliance of Child and Family Services.

Once again, your good work and assistance is greatly appreciated, and I hope to also count you in as a sponsor.

Sincerely,

James C. Ramos  
Assemblymember, 40<sup>th</sup> District



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## **SUMMARY**

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AB 2112 creates a statewide Office of Suicide Prevention within the Office of the Surgeon General to study and address the crisis of suicide, specifically focusing on youth.

## **BACKGROUND**

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The State and Legislature have taken a variety of steps to improve access to mental healthcare and improved mental health outcomes. This includes the creation of the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission, an independent state agency established in 2004 by voter-approved Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act.

In their 2019 report on California's strategic plan for suicide prevention from 2020 to 2025, the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) made a variety of recommendation to improve policies and outcomes statewide.

In their recommendations, the MHSOAC recommended that the state develop an Office of Suicide Prevention to create visible, state-level leadership on suicide prevention.

## **PROBLEM**

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The Legislature has made significant strides in suicide prevention, however, risk of suicide and self-harm remains an issue across our state. Suicide risk is especially acute among adolescents, older adults, veterans, and LGBTQ youth and adults.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people ages 15-24 in the U.S., with a nationwide survey finding in 2015 that 1 in 6 high school students reported seriously considering suicide in the previous year, and more than 1 in 12 reported attempting it.

While resources have been allocated to address this crisis, coordination of state resources has remained a challenge.

## **SOLUTION**

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AB 2112 takes a vital step in addressing the crisis of youth suicide by coordinating state resources into a statewide Office of Suicide Prevention. This Office will devote resources to studying this crisis, make recommendations to the legislature, and advise on best practices to ensure that statewide resources are used to properly affect the crisis.

By creating a statewide Office of Suicide Prevention, the legislature can target specific populations and age groups with acute suicide risk to begin to address the root causes of the crisis.

## **SPONSOR**

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California Alliance of Child and Family Services

## **STAFF CONTACT**

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