

**Floor Statement of Congressman Fred Upton (R-MI)**  
**September is Suicide Prevention Month**  
**September 22, 2016**

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the fact that September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. This gives us a chance to come together to promote awareness about the issues of suicide prevention and how we can all help others to talk about suicide. For many families in communities across the country, loved ones are gone far too soon because of suicide.

Suicidal thoughts and actions know no bounds. They affect people of all ages, race, sexes, and religions. The statistics are startling: Suicide has become the third leading cause of death among young people and is the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death here in the United States. Each year more than 40,000 Americans die by suicide – more than 100 per day, on average.

Suicide prevention is deeply personal to me. I don't talk about it often, but my uncle, my daughter's college roommate, and my son's dear girlfriend's sister all committed suicide. These losses have left an indelible impression on my life.

Last week, I was in Kalamazoo's Bronson Park for the Gryphon Place Suicide Prevention Walk. A young woman named Kait stood before a crowd of more than 100 and read a poem she had written about being bullied and, as a result, how she harbored thoughts of suicide. Hearing her deeply personal story broke my heart. As the father of two young adults, my thoughts quickly turned to them and their school experiences. Bullying is a serious problem in our schools and can lead to depression, psychological issues, and yes – suicide.

After she finished, I followed up with Kait and told her that she is not alone. Anyone considering suicide or having suicidal thoughts should know the same: You are not alone and there is always help and options available to you.

In our communities, we should do more to stop bullying the minute it rears its ugly head. We should do more to reach out to those vulnerable to suicidal thoughts and tendencies, particularly young people as they grapple with the pressures of growing up. We should also do more to treat mental health issues that can lead to suicide.

Here in the House of Representatives we recently were able to pass a bipartisan piece of legislation sponsored by Dr. Tim Murphy to do just that. We voted to give a much needed upgrade to our mental health system and deliver real reforms that will make a difference for folks suffering from mental health illnesses. In July, it was advanced through the Energy and Commerce Committee by a 53 to 0 vote and then on the House Floor by a 422 to 2 vote. This landmark vote marks the most significant reforms to our nation's mental health programs in decades and I was proud to shepherd this important piece of legislation.

Suicide is not an issue that can linger in the shadows. We must confront it and the underlying issues behind it – together.

I would like to insert Kait's message of hope and inspiration into the Congressional Record – and it can be found on our website, Upton dot house dot gov.

Thank you and I yield back.