

Senate Democratic Office

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Harper Angel prefiles bill to add suicide prevention, sexual assault, and domestic violence hotlines to student IDs

**FRANKFORT** – Senator Denise Harper Angel, D-Louisville, has prefiled legislation that would provide crisis-intervention hotline information to public school and college students in Kentucky. Bill Request 435 requires hotline information for suicide prevention, sexual assault, and domestic violence on school issued student identification badges for public schools, grades six through twelve and all Kentucky university issued student IDs. Schools who do not issue student IDs are not affected.

The legislation comes on the heels of rising suicide rates and sexual violence among Kentucky youth. According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, suicide is the second leading cause of death for Kentuckians ages 15-34. The U.S. suicide rate for children and teens 18 and younger has grown by more than 90 percent over the last decade. Most recent findings show suicide rates at the highest count since data collection began in 1999. Kentucky law already requires suicide prevention training in grades six through twelve.

“Suicide, instances of domestic abuse, and sexual assault are becoming all too common among our young people,” Sen. Harper Angel said. “By having these crisis-prevention numbers on the back of students’ IDs, we are letting them know that they are not alone and that help is readily available to them.”

The domestic and sexual assault hotlines are also crisis-intervention tools. The Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, states that more than 50 percent of sexual assaults take place between August and November. In addition, women in college ages 18-24 are three times more likely than women in general to experience sexual assault. According the Sexual Assault Response Team Advisory Committee, one of every two Kentucky women and one of every five Kentucky men will experience sexual assault in their lifetime. Many of these instances go without a police report ever being filed.

“These numbers are rising at an alarming rate,” Sen. Harper Angel added. “Kentucky can provide students that are struggling with immediate help by requiring this information on their identification badge.”

Secondary and post-secondary institutions have made significant strides in providing prevention services to students. However, many students still face wait times to receive the help that they need in regards to crisis prevention. Direct access to hotline numbers on their student ID’s can fill that gap.

“Student safety is a priority at the University of Louisville,” said UofL President Neeli Bendapudi. “Sharing key, perhaps life-saving, information with our students is one way we can let them know they are not alone in times of crisis.”

Eileen Recktenwald, Executive Director of the Kentucky Association of Sexual Assault Programs (KASAP), acknowledged the resource as a way to streamline prevention services to students that are dealing with these crises.

“We are grateful to the Senator for providing easy and immediate access to crisis assistance to students across the Commonwealth,” she said. “Using this method of providing such important and possibly lifesaving information is inspired and we are in total support of her efforts”

BR 435 will be considered when the General Assembly convenes in January for the 2020 Legislative Session.

Senator Harper Angel represents the 35th senatorial district that includes a portion of Jefferson County.

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Note: For a high-res. JPEG photo file of Senator Harper Angel, please log on to [www.lrc.state.ky.us/pubinfo/ephoto.htm](http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/pubinfo/ephoto.htm).