

ITEM #58

(Please Note: The content of the letter is the same, however, one is signed by a list of national organizations and the other is signed by Florida based organizations)

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL REGULAR MEETING

MAY 24, 2022

**SUBMITTED AT THE REQUEST OF
COMMISSIONER NAN RICH**

April 20, 2022

Paul O. Burns, Ed.D.
Deputy Chancellor of Educator Quality
Florida Department of Education
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Joseph A. Ladapo, M.D., Ph.D.
State Surgeon General
Florida Department of Health
4052 Bald Cypress Way
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dr. Burns and Dr. Ladapo,

We, the undersigned national health, education, and civil rights organizations, urgently call on the Florida Departments of Health and Education to continue administering the Youth Risk Behavior Survey in your state. The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), designed and administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has been used by states across the country since 1990 to monitor health-related behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability among youth and young adults. The information generated is essential to educators, policymakers, health care providers, and other youth-serving professionals to help them design programs, improve policies and practices, assess program effectiveness, and monitor trends related to the health and wellbeing of youth and young adults.

Florida has participated in the YRBSS since 1991. The questionnaire is available online for Florida's parents to review and the state has provided the opportunity for parents to opt-out if they do not want their child to participate. Further, the survey is anonymous, so students' responses are never linked to their individual identity, and individual-level results are never shared with their school. For twenty years, the results of the state's YRBS have enabled Florida's policymakers, educators, and public health agencies to better understand the risks Florida's young people face and to work to identify policies, programs, and strategies to help mitigate these risks. For example, data from the 2019 YRBS show that 34% of Florida's students felt sad, hopeless, or depressed for a significant period of time that year — up from 26% in 2013. Additionally, 16% reported engaging in self-harm, and a similar percentage reported that they had seriously considered suicide. These are alarming statistics and should be a clarion call to the Departments of Education and Health that young people are suffering and need access to mental health services. Without YRBS data, the Departments of Health and Education will not have data to hold themselves accountable to Florida's families.

Departments of Education and Health across the country with access to YRBS data are better positioned to meet young people's needs and support them in thriving at school and beyond. Florida's young people deserve at least that.

April 20, 2022

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State Surgeon General
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Dr. Burns and Dr. Ladapo,

We, the undersigned state and local health, education, and civil rights organizations, urgently call on the Florida Departments of Health and Education to continue administering the Youth Risk Behavior Survey in your state. The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), designed and administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has been used by states across the country since 1990 to monitor health-related behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability among youth and young adults. The information generated is essential to educators, policymakers, health care providers, and other youth-serving professionals to help them design programs, improve policies and practices, assess program effectiveness, and monitor trends related to the health and wellbeing of youth and young adults.

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Departments of Education and Health across the country with access to YRBS data are better positioned to meet young people's needs and support them in thriving at school and beyond. Florida's young people deserve at least that.

We, the undersigned, urge you to continue administering the Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

Sincerely,

A Woman's Choice of Jacksonville
ALSO Youth
Center for Psychological Growth
Equality Florida
Florida Psychological Association
Florida Association of School Psychologists
Florida Association of School Social Workers
Florida Health Justice Project
Florida National Organization for Women
(NOW)
Florida NOW Education Fund
Florida Policy Institute
Florida Parent Teacher Association
Greater Orlando National Organization for
Women (NOW)
Jacksonville National Organization for
Women (Jax NOW)
JASMYN, Inc.
League of Women Voters of Broward County
League of Women Voters of Florida

League of Women Voters of the St.
Petersburg Area
National Asian Pacific American Women's
Forum (NAPAWF) Florida
One Orlando Alliance
Orlando Youth Alliance, Inc.
PFLAG Gulf Region
PFLAG South Miami Chapter
Planned Parenthood of South, East and
North Florida
Power U Center for Social Change
Pridelines
Pro-Choice Coalition of Broward County
Progress Florida Education Institute
Ruth's List Florida
Tampa bay access force
The Alliance for LGBTQ Youth
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Miami
Women's Foundation of Florida
Women's Voices Media

Cc: Anastasios Kmoutsas, General Counsel, Department of Education
Andrew McGinley, Acting General Counsel, Department of Education
Jacob Oliva, Senior Chancellor, Department of Education
Richard Corcoran, Commissioner, Department of Education
Shevaun Harris, Secretary, Department of Children and Families

We, the undersigned, urge you to continue administering the Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Youth

AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families

American Psychological Association

American School Counselor Association

American School Health Association

Answer

Cardea

CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America

Genders & Sexualities Alliance Network

Grove Foundation

Healthy Teen Network

Human Rights Campaign

In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda

National Association of School Nurses

National Association of School Psychologists

National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)

National Parent Teacher Association

PFLAG National

Physicians for Reproductive Health

Power to Decide

Reproductive Health Access Project

SIECUS: Sex Ed for Social Change

The Trevor Project

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Andrew McGinley, Acting General Counsel, Department of Education
Jacob Oliva, Senior Chancellor, Department of Education
Richard Corcoran, Commissioner, Department of Education
Shevaun Harris, Secretary, Department of Children and Families