

Access Advocacy



American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention

Happy Spring, and welcome to the May 2026 edition of Access Advocacy!

We're excited to share important news about the work you make possible. Two weeks ago, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) and The Jed Foundation (JED) announced our intent to merge as equals, becoming the nation's largest nonprofit dedicated to preventing suicide across the lifespan.

United as one organization—**the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention/The Jed Foundation (AFSP/JED)**—we will leverage the strengths and resources of both AFSP and JED to achieve even greater impact in suicide prevention than either organization could independently.

This is a pivotal moment for the suicide prevention field, and we are deeply grateful to be part of a community that believes in our shared mission: to prevent suicide across the lifespan and bring hope to those affected by suicide loss or risk.

If you'd like to learn more, you can read our full announcement [here](#).

Supreme Court Ruling on Conversion Therapy

On March 31, the U.S. Supreme Court [issued a decision in *Chiles v. Salazar*](#) regarding a challenge to Colorado's 2019 law that banned "conversion therapy" for minors. The Court ruled that the law likely violated the First Amendment's Free Speech Clause and sent the case back down to the lower courts for a higher standard of review, which may ultimately result in the state's ban on conversion therapy being overturned and future challenges in other states. AFSP is deeply disappointed in this ruling and will continue to support affirmative and evidence-based policies and practices that protect mental health and reduce suicide risk.

Scientific evidence shows that "conversion therapy" and other sexual orientation change efforts are harmful, unethical, ineffective, and increase the risk of suicide among LGBTQ+ youth. In September 2025, AFSP joined The Trevor Project and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) in filing an [amicus \(friend-of-the-court\) brief](#) in *Chiles v. Salazar* in favor of protecting LGBTQ+ young people from conversion therapy.

Read our [statement](#) denouncing the decision, learn more about how AFSP continues to advocate for suicide prevention for the [LGBTQ+ community](#) at the federal and state levels, and visit our [Action Center](#) to make your voice heard.

Legislative Updates

Federal

As Congress begins work on Fiscal Year 2027 appropriations, AFSP has already begun taking action to support key federal suicide prevention and mental health programs. AFSP submitted [written testimony](#) to the House Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (LHHS-E) Appropriations Subcommittee, requesting \$38 million for the CDC's Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Program, \$549.6 million for the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, and \$2.548 billion for the National Institute of Mental Health. This testimony underscores the urgent need for sustained and increased investments across the federal suicide prevention and mental health continuum. In addition to AFSP's submission, the broader [Mental Health Liaison Group](#) also submitted [testimony](#) to the subcommittee, signaling strong, unified support for these programs across the suicide prevention and mental health policy community.

This advocacy builds on recent progress. On February 4, the President signed the Fiscal Year 2026 LHHS-E funding bill, which provided level funding or modest increases for many of AFSP's priority programs. We are encouraged by the bipartisan support for sustained investments for programs administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). This victory for key suicide prevention and mental health programs came after an extended appropriations process and would not have been possible without the support of advocates. **Thank you for taking action.** Your advocacy helped ensure level funding for these lifesaving programs.

Read the following [statement](#) from AFSP CEO Robert Gebbia for more information about FY26 funding.

AFSP is proud to have worked with members of Congress this spring to introduce several important pieces of legislation to strengthen the crisis care continuum. In March, Representatives Jamie Raskin (MD-08) and Don Bacon (NE-02) reintroduced the bipartisan [Stabilization to Prevent \(STOP\) Suicide Act](#), an AFSP priority bill which would provide funding for suicide-specific crisis stabilization. We also worked with Representatives Raskin and Bacon to support the introduction of the bipartisan [9-8-8 CONNECT Act](#) to strengthen follow-up care for individuals who interact with the 988 system. Read [Representative Raskin's press release](#) to learn more.

AFSP also worked with Representatives Troy Carter (LA-02), Yvette Clark (NY-09), Rich McCormick (GA-07), and Mike Turner (OH-10) to support the introduction of the bipartisan [Mental Health Workforce Act](#), which would help diversify the mental health workforce by incentivizing students at Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs) and Minority Serving Institutions

(MSIs) to pursue careers in the behavioral health field and work in areas designated as "Health Professional Shortage Areas". Read [Representative Carter's press release](#) to learn more.

State



Advocacy Action Days: Season of Successes

Especially in times of tumult, we remind ourselves to remain steadfast in our advocacy to prevent suicide. We could not do all this without the immense efforts of **Volunteer Advocates like you!** Your stories are making a difference.

- **Forty states** hosted Advocacy Action Days (AAD) this season and only a few more to go.
- With your support, AFSP backed [18 bills](#) that have now been signed into law!
- Volunteer Advocates sent **1,600+ emails** to their public officials to urge their support of suicide prevention.

Visit our [AFSP Action Center](#) to participate in active campaigns in support of our remaining AAD events, and view a full list of both enacted and pending AFSP-supported legislation at afsp.org/statebills.

Newest States Bloom with New Growth

In the wake of a devastating typhoon, [AFSP-Alaska](#) and [Inseparable](#) co-hosted a press conference with high school students who lost loved ones to suicide. The chapter also hosted a community event attended by more than twenty legislators. Then, advocates went to the Capitol to urge state legislators to fund the statewide 988 Lifeline through a sustainable telecom fee and support youth mental health, especially in Native Alaskan communities.



This year, [AFSP-Hawai'i](#) hosted their **first in-person Advocacy Action Day**. Legislators and advocates shared their mo'olelo (stories) about connection, belonging, resilience, advocacy, never assuming someone else's story, unconditional love, and HĀ (the breath of life that connects us all). This wasn't just an event; it reflected a community in Hawai'i that shows up for one another, even when the work is heavy.

Advocacy Resources at Your Fingertips

Looking for tools to support your advocacy work? Be sure to visit [AFSP's Advocacy Resource Page](#), which serves as a central hub for helpful materials, guidance, and updates. The page also archives past editions of *Access Advocacy*, making it easy to revisit timely policy insights, take action, and stay informed about ongoing advocacy efforts.

New Resources

View our [State Policy & Advocacy Report 2024-2025](#) and celebrate our collective successes at the state and local level over the last 2 years! Many thanks to our AFSP chapters and Volunteer Advocates who helped to inspire lifesaving policy changes in states across the country.

View our [Advocacy Action Day Impact Spotlight](#) to learn how these signature events are empowering advocates and catalyzing legislative action. To view AFSP's full Impact Spotlight series, visit afsp.org/Impact-Insights.

Learn more about **suicide and maternal mental health** by viewing [this new fact sheet](#) from the Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance that includes contributions from several AFSP staff.

afsp.org/advocacy