

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the
Ways and Means Committee
For the Hearing on
Public Schools –Lifesaver Schools Program – Establishment (HB612)
February 12, 2025**

Favorable

Free State PTA (FSPTA) represents over 70,000 volunteer members and families in over 500 public schools. As the state’s premier and largest child advocacy organization, Free State PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education. We are here to ask for a favorable report for ***House Bill 612. This bill aligns with Free State PTA’s principles for legislative action¹ which states that schools must provide a safe environment where all students, teachers and staff can thrive.***

In alignment with our principles for legislative action, Implementing Inclusive curriculum is one of our advocacy priorities for the 2025 legislative session. This bill establishes the Lifesaver Schools Program to recognize public schools that provide health and safety training to students and school personnel. Students would be empowered through education to step in at any time to help or save a friend or a loved one and staff would have the tools to keep all kids safe in their classroom or at school activities and athletic events.

It was important to PTA members that this bill would not create an unfunded mandate, so we are pleased that it is an incentive to provide education and resources in an innovative fashion. Recognizing schools with this designation would also help parents and students understand that their school prioritizes safety. Considering the increase in the need for mental health services and the [increasing rates of suicide for all youth, but especially in youth of color and LGBTQ+ youth²](#), providing training in suicide prevention could save lives and possibly reduce inequities. Free State PTA believes this bill is vital in ensuring the wellbeing of children and therefore, strongly urges that this committee issues a **favorable report on HB612.**

Testimony is presented on behalf of
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¹ https://www.fspta.org/files/ugd/d2f0e2_a663d6f6c6ad49a2aab4bc9c095c494f.pdf

² <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2023/07/psychologists-preventing-teen-suicide>