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Budget and Taxation Committee

Health and Human Services
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Joint Committees
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Testimony for Senate Bill 94
Public Health - Maryland Suicide Fatality Review Committee
January 18, 2022

Madam Chair Kelley and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present **Senate Bill 94: Public Health - Maryland Suicide Fatality Review Committee**. Senate Bill 94 is a response to the mental health and suicide crisis in our state, both of which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

This Bill passed unanimously in this Committee last session.

We have already identified suicide as a serious problem in our State. In 2009, the Governor's Commission on Suicide Prevention was established. The Commission's preamble identifies suicide as the 11th leading cause of death in Maryland. Senate Bill 94 is an extension of the Commission's efforts to prevent suicide deaths.

Senate Bill 94 establishes the Maryland Suicide Fatality Review Committee to examine the factors contributing to suicide deaths. The Committee will study trends, risk factors, best practices, lapses in response, and barriers to safety. The team must meet quarterly and make recommendation on policy or law changes to both the Governor and the General Assembly. Studies and findings will be disseminated to policymakers, health care providers, health care facilities, and the public.

My sponsor panel will address updated and current data, provide justification on why the bill is needed, and the positive outcome this legislation would have in the community

As we continue through the COVID Pandemic, it is important we address the impacts to those most at risk, including those with mental health issues. Senate Bill 94 is an essential step in suicide prevention, as data and information are necessary to craft preventative interventions. Thank you for your consideration and I respectfully ask for a favorable report of Senate Bill 94.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Addie C. Eckardt".

Senator Addie C. Eckardt