



NEW JERSEY

Association of State Colleges and Universities

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Senate Higher Education Committee

March 3, 2016

Senate Bill No. 1417

The New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities shares the concerns of the sponsor of this legislation and the members of the community over the mental health of our students. Their safety is our institutions' top priority.

We do, however, have concerns about this bill. The bill would require all institutions of higher education to post the total number of students enrolled in the institution who committed suicide or attempted suicide in the prior academic year.

While we appreciate the sponsor's desire to prevent suicides on campus, we do not believe that this information would be helpful to current students or to prospective students or their parents. The information required by the bill is potentially misleading, because it presumes that there is a correlation between what services the school provides and the number of suicides or attempted suicides on campus. That is certainly not the case. Moreover, the information would not give the public a true representation of what services are available at the institution and what has been or will be provided to students in need of support.

In addition, we have been informed by experts that publications of this information could have the unintended effect of either glamorizing suicide, or contributing to the suicide contagion effect.

The state colleges and universities take the health and well-being of all of our students very seriously. We believe the best approach is to devote our resources to providing direct support and services to students in need.

NJASCU
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