

Supporting Trauma-Informed Education Practices Act

Introduced by Congresswoman Jahana Hayes

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, youth and young adults ages 10–24 years account for 15% of all suicides. In 2021, suicide was the second leading cause of death for this age group, accounting for 7,126 deaths. Suicide rates for this age group increased 52.2% between 2000–2021. The JED Foundation found that trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can lead to a higher risk of suicide. Research shows people with a history of trauma and PTSD have a higher risk of suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, and suicide. Additionally, alcohol and opioid use disorders significantly increase the risk of trauma for youth.

The *Supporting Trauma-Informed Education Practices Act* would support children who have been exposed to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma, such as witnessing violence, parental addiction, or abuse. The bill authorizes grants to improve trauma support services and mental health care for students in educational settings. The grants could help fund community partnerships with mental health providers and initiatives to improve prevention, screen, treat and support students through schoolwide positive behavioral interventions, professional development, and social and emotional learning.

Specifically, the *Supporting Trauma-Informed Education Practices Act* would:

- Develop or improve prevention, screening, referral, and treatment and support services to students;
- Implement schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports, or other trauma-informed models of support;
- Provide professional development to teachers, teacher assistants, school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, and mental health professionals; and
- Engage with families and communities to increase awareness of child and youth trauma.

The bill has been endorsed by the Campaign for Trauma-Informed Policy & Practice.

In the 117th Congress, the *Supporting Trauma-Informed Education Practices Act* passed the House of Representatives as a part of the *Mental Health Matters Act*. The *Mental Health Matters Act* helps to rebuild schools and address the alarming mental health crisis plaguing the nation.