



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

JESSE JAMES

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Rep. James Appointed to Speaker's Task Force on Suicide Prevention

Madison – Speaker Vos has appointed Rep. Jesse James (R-Altoona) to the newly created Speaker's Task Force on Suicide Prevention, chaired by Rep. Ballweg (R-Markesan). In response to the increasing rates of suicide in Wisconsin, the task force will work collaboratively with policy makers and submit recommendations to reverse the trend.

"I look forward to learning more and more about this topic, and if we can save just one life with this task force, we have accomplished a lot. However, I am expecting to save many more," said Rep. James. "This issue touches every life, every family, every age group in this state. We need to identify, act, and protect those who do not want to, or cannot, protect themselves."

"I have been exposed to this topic since I was 12 years old. I had a childhood friend's dad commit suicide, a fellow high school classmate, a military friend attempted to shoot himself in my barracks room. During my time in law enforcement I have been subjected to many different suicide scenes, involving different age groups. I feel I can bring a real in-depth look to this task force and I look forward to protecting those who may feel they cannot protect themselves from harm."

The Speaker's Task Force on Suicide Prevention will hold hearings around the state to receive input from survivors, experts, advocates for suicide prevention, families who have been impacted and community members. Legislators are tasked with some of the following:

- Evaluate our state's current resources and programs dedicated to suicide prevention and awareness; identify where needs are not being met and where improvements can be made
- Identify opportunities to target and assist especially at-risk individuals, such as farmers and youth
- Explore ways to better harness the use of technology to reach and understand vulnerable populations
- Increase awareness and incentivize the use of evidence-based programs and protocols
- Investigate treatment and support services options; eliminate barriers that hinder individuals from receiving care

Policy recommendations are expected to be made to Speaker Vos by this Fall. Speaker Vos has formed seven other bipartisan task forces since 2013 in the Wisconsin State Assembly.

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