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**Suicide Prevention Action Network Applauds President Bush's Signing of
Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act Appropriation**

FY 05 Omnibus Spending Bill Appropriates \$10 Million for Youth Suicide Prevention

Washington, D.C. (December 9, 2004) – The Suicide Prevention Action Network (SPAN USA) applauded President Bush for signing H.R. 4818, the \$388 billion omnibus spending bill, which allocates \$10 million to youth suicide prevention initiatives as part of the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act, signed into law on October 21, 2004. The act authorized \$82 million over three years to states, Indian tribes and colleges and universities for the development of youth suicide prevention and intervention programs.

Suicide, the third-leading cause of death among young people, takes the life of one person under the age of 25 every two hours and 15 minutes. One in 12 college students today has made a suicide plan.

Of the \$10 million, \$3 million will go towards the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC). This center provides prevention support, training and informational materials to strengthen the efforts of coalitions, task forces, alliances and professional groups working to implement suicide prevention programs. The SPRC was appropriated by Congress to: build capacity; serve as clearing house for information; provide technical assistance; and build the suicide prevention evidence base.

The remaining \$7 million will go towards grants and co-operative agreements to develop and implement statewide and tribal youth suicide early intervention and prevention strategies in schools, educational institutions, juvenile justice systems, substance abuse programs, mental health programs, foster care systems, and other child and youth support organizations.

"We applaud President Bush for his continued support of this lifesaving legislation," said Jerry Reed, M.S.W., executive director of SPAN USA. "The President, Congress and the sponsors of the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act have provided a major boost to suicide prevention. SPAN USA will continue to advocate for public policies to make suicide a public health priority and advocate for mental health parity to ensure people have access to affordable mental health services.

"This is an important first step in curbing the more than 4,000 young lives lost to suicide each year, but our work is by no means done. This bill is testimony to the hard work of suicide prevention advocates, who through their own loss, have worked hard to turn their grief into action to prevent further suicides. In 2006, SPAN USA will work hard to call for a full appropriation of \$27 million to further advance youth suicide prevention initiatives in America," Reed continued.

SPAN USA is the nation's only suicide prevention organization dedicated to leveraging grassroots support among suicide survivors and others to advance public policies that prevent suicide. Since its founding nine years ago, SPAN USA has led the drive to make suicide a public health priority by building political will and calling for the development and implementation of a national strategy for suicide prevention. Using its extensive grassroots network of survivors and advocates, SPAN USA has actively promoted the cause on Capitol Hill and in state legislatures. For more information, please visit www.spanusa.org.

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