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Suicide Prevention Action Network USA Public Policy Priorities Move Ahead in 110th Congress

Policies Aimed at Preventing Suicide Among Youth and Veterans

Washington, D.C. (October 24, 2007). The Suicide Prevention Action Network USA (SPAN USA) today applauded action taken by members of the 110th Congress, which has moved important priorities for suicide prevention forward, including efforts aimed at veterans, youth, increasing research and improving data that is collected for prevention efforts.

SPAN USA is pleased that this Congress has taken significant action to help prevent suicide, said Jerry Reed, executive director of SPAN USA. Suicide is a serious public health problem. But many suicides are preventable through research, treatment and education. That's why SPAN USA has focused its efforts in those areas through support for public policies that can help save lives.

Legislative priorities that moved forward included:

- Final approval of the Joshua Omvig Veterans Suicide Prevention Act (H.R. 327) by the U.S. House on a unanimous vote, sending the measure to the President's desk;
- \$40 million in funding, an increase of \$13.3 million over the previous fiscal year, for youth suicide prevention through Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act grants as part of the U.S. Senate's version of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies funding bill (H.R. 3043/S. 1710);
- \$7.5 million for the National Violent Death Reporting System to improve data collection as part of the U.S. Senate's version of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies funding bill; and
- Language that encourages the National Institute of Mental Health to increase its investment in suicide prevention research as part of the U.S. Senate's version of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies funding bill.

SPAN USA anticipates that President George W. Bush will sign the veterans' suicide prevention bill and is urging the House of Representatives to support the suicide prevention funding provisions in the Senate funding bill.

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NOTE: To interview Jerry Reed, please contact Melanie Fonder at (202) 715-1568 or melanie.fonder@dittus.com.

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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 in 1996, 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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