



## AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR Suicide Prevention

July 21, 2017

Representative Raúl Grijalva  
1511 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Grijalva:

On behalf of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), I am writing to thank you for introducing **The Native American Suicide Prevention Act of 2017**. Suicide rates are extremely high among all segments of the American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) population, but youth are most heavily impacted as 40% of all AI/AN suicides occur among those 15-24 years old. Additionally, the rate of suicide for American Indian and Alaska Natives is far higher than that of any other ethnic group in the United States—70% higher than the rate for the general population.

Through your action and leadership we can save lives and increase the quality of life in AI/AN communities. Your legislation which requires collaboration by AI/AN communities to the designees receiving federal grants to implement statewide suicide prevention strategies is key to developing successful suicide prevention programs for this population. We believe The Native American Suicide Prevention Act of 2017 will go a long way towards helping AFSP achieve its goal of reducing the suicide rate across the United States 20% by 2025.

**Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in this country. It is the second leading cause of death for ages 10 – 24. Today, an American will complete suicide every 11.89 minutes and more than 44,000 Americans from all walks of life will end their lives this year. From research we know that 90% of those who die by suicide have underlying, diagnosable mental disorders present at the time of their death.**

AFSP is the leading national not-for-profit organization exclusively dedicated to understanding and preventing suicide through research, education and advocacy, and to reaching out to people with mental disorders and those impacted by suicide. AFSP represents a constituency that now exceeds one million individuals including scientific experts, mental health clinicians, individuals who live with mental disorders, those who have survived their own suicide attempt and, those who have experienced one of the worst outcomes of mental disorders – the loss of a loved one to suicide.

Representative Grijalva, AFSP thanks you for your dedication to preventing suicide in the AI/AN communities and for the leadership you are providing to this critical public health need in our country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John H. Madigan".

John Madigan  
Vice President and Chief Public Policy Officer

AFSP PUBLIC POLICY OFFICE  
440 First Street, NW, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 449.3600 phone • (202) 449.3601 fax



AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR  
Suicide Prevention

afsp.org