

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Human Services
For HB 2809

Compiled on: Tuesday, April 8, 2025 2:02 PM

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Hearing Date: April 8, 2025 8:00 AM

Eve Margolis

Self

Austin, TX

Please support this bill

Saanvi Mittal

Self

Austin, TX

I support HB 2809 because we shouldn't have to do something until it's too late.

Ayaan Moledina

Students Engaged in Advancing Texas

Austin, TX

Chair Hull, Vice Chair Manuel, and Members of the House Human Services Committee:

Thank you for hearing HB 2809 and to Representative Rose for bringing this bill forward. My name is Ayaan Moledina, and I'm writing not just as a 10th grade student who has experienced firsthand the challenges of mental health struggles, but also as someone who believes deeply in the power of policy to change — and save — lives. I am also a leader of Students Engaged in Advancing Texas, representing hundreds of thousands of my peers across the state and entire nation.

I have struggled with clinical depression and OCD. There were days when even getting out of bed felt impossible. At my lowest points, I felt completely alone, as if no one saw me — and worse, like no one would care if I disappeared. It took time, support, and a lot of courage to ask for help. I was lucky to have access to caring adults and mental health resources. But not every child in Texas is as lucky — especially children in the state's care.

I've struggled with my mental health for years — since I was in middle school, really. I've battled anxiety, depression, and at times, I've felt completely overwhelmed by a sadness I couldn't explain and couldn't escape. There were moments when it felt like the pain would never stop. Moments when I truly believed that the world — my family, my friends, everyone — would be better off without me.

I've attempted suicide. Not once, but multiple times. And I'm still here because someone noticed. Because someone cared. Because someone took action before it was too late. But it shouldn't take luck or coincidence for a child to be seen in their pain. Especially not a child who is already in the care of the state — a child in foster care, already traumatized, already vulnerable.

House Bill 2809 is vital because it acknowledges a heartbreaking reality: there are children in the managing conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services who are attempting suicide. Right now, their experiences are invisible in our data and reporting systems. That means their pain is also invisible. This bill would require the department to report the number of suicide attempts among children in its care — a necessary step in making sure we see these children, understand what they're going through, and provide the support they need.

Data alone won't solve our mental health crisis — but it's a start. It gives us a way to measure, to respond, and to hold ourselves accountable. If we don't track suicide attempts among these children, we're sending a message that their pain doesn't matter. I know what it's like to feel invisible, and I wouldn't wish that on anyone — especially not a child in crisis.

This bill is not just about numbers. It's about kids. Kids who are hurting. Kids who deserve to live and to heal. Kids who are depending on adults — on you — to care enough to act.

Please pass HB 2809. Help make sure we never look away from the pain of Texas children.

Marilyn Hartman

Co-chair, Advocacy Committee, NAMI Central Texas (National Alliance on Mental Illness)

Austin, TX

I support this bill. It's important to know how many youths under the care of the Dept. of Family and Protective Services attempt suicide, which is alarmingly high and perhaps rising in this population, particularly amongst foster care youths. Only in knowing the extent of the problem can meaningful solutions be created.

Eric Kunish, Co-chair

NAMI Central Texas

Austin, TX

I support this bill.

Elizabeth Henry
RecoveryPeople/ Texas Coalition for Healthy Minds
Round Rock, TX
We support this bill.