

To: Senate Committee on Health & Welfare  
From: Rep. Gabrielle Lucke of Hartford  
Re: H 230

In the fall I was approached by constituent who is a school counselor. She asked why we allow minors to seek mental health services without parental consent for alcohol, drug and sexually transmitted diseases and not for sexual orientation and gender identity issues. She felt it was a serious inconsistency in our approach. She noted that often times minors are seeking these services to both explore their personal issues but to also prepare for sharing who they are with their parents. She had a particular case where a student's parents forbid the services and the student turned to self-harm.

Research notes the link between young people struggling with sexual orientation, gender issues and suicide. Working in high education, I sadly know this from experience particularly during my time working in both residential life and college health services.

For some of us our parents are greatest advocates and for others our greatest adversary. This legislation gives minors an opportunity to seek help and services that can help them negotiate all they are struggling with regarding who they are and who they are becoming. It can enrich their lives and their relationship with parents and family. More importantly, it can save their lives.

There is also an opportunity for the Senate to expand the access to mental health services and treatment to minors. I have come to learn that over 30 states allow minors to access this help, regardless of issue, without parental consent. If you deem appropriate, I hope the Committee considers this as an amendment to this important legislation.