

City of Palo Alto

Office of the Mayor and City Council

May 20, 2026

The Honorable Marc Berman
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 6130
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2003 (Berman) Statewide Suicide Prevention Training
City of Palo Alto – Notice of Support**

Dear Assemblymember Berman,

On behalf of the City of Palo Alto, I am writing to express our strong support for AB 2003, which would establish a permanent, statewide, no-cost suicide prevention training program for students, educators, and families.

Palo Alto has experienced firsthand the devastating impacts of youth suicide, particularly in and around our rail corridors. The Churchill Avenue crossing has long been a location of concern, and recent incidents have underscored the urgency of expanding meaningful, preventative interventions. Our City Council has actively explored a range of responses, from infrastructure changes to increased on-site monitoring, while also partnering with organizations like the Jed Foundation to strengthen youth mental health supports. Despite these efforts, it is clear that local action alone is not enough to address a crisis of this scale.

AB 2003 takes a critical, upstream approach by equipping those closest to young people with the tools to recognize warning signs and intervene early. By creating a free, evidence-based, online training program available statewide to students aged 13 and older, school staff, and parents, this bill ensures that entire school communities are better prepared to respond when youth are in crisis.

Importantly, the bill builds on a proven model. The prior statewide training program reached tens of thousands of Californians and demonstrated measurable success, with the vast majority of participants reporting increased confidence in their ability to help someone experiencing suicidal thoughts. However, with the expiration of that program in 2024, schools have been left without a consistent, accessible training option, despite the continued rise in youth mental health challenges.

In addition, AB 2003's requirement to compile suicide risk screening data at the statewide level represents an important step toward better understanding and addressing disparities across regions and student populations. This data-driven approach will help inform more targeted interventions and resource allocation, ensuring that communities like Palo Alto, and others across California, can respond more effectively.

For cities grappling with the real and immediate impacts of youth suicide, AB 2003 offers a scalable, preventative solution that complements local efforts. It recognizes that schools, peers, and families are often the first line of defense, and it provides them with the tools they need to act.

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For these reasons, the City of Palo Alto is proud to support AB 2003. Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue and for your continued commitment to improving youth mental health outcomes across California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Vicki A. Veenker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Vicki" being the most prominent.

Vicki Veenker
Mayor
City of Palo Alto

cc: Senator Josh Becker