

Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act Signed

On Thursday, October 21st, President Bush signed the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act named in honor of Senator Gordon Smith's son who committed suicide a little over a year ago. This bill will help enable states, Indian tribes, colleges and universities to develop suicide prevention and intervention programs. Though the bill has been passed and signed into law the money has not been authorized yet by Congress for the grants that will be awarded. It is still vital for advocates to keep informed and for us to continue working towards getting the money appropriated for these vital programs. We are not sure as of yet under which bill the funding will be appropriated. I will update you after the November 2nd election to let you know how to advocate for the funding for this life saving bill.

At NAMI's 25th Anniversary Celebration Convention held in Washington, DC in September, Senator Gordon Smith was awarded the NAMI Legislative Leadership Award.

"Senator and Mrs. Smith have turned personal tragedy into positive public action," said NAMI executive director Michael Fitzpatrick. "They represent profiles of courage and determination born in pain and reflect NAMI's own tradition of advocacy. Our members not only honor them - we embrace and support them as part of the NAMI family."

Please call, e-mail or write to our children's champion, Senator Chris Dodd, to thank him for the instrumental role that he played in bringing this bill to life. He visited Connecticut several times this past year to meet with families whose children had either committed suicide or attempted to do so. You can obtain his phone number, address and e-mail by logging onto his web mail at www.dodd.senate.gov I would also like to thank the Connecticut families who shared their stories this past March and August with the Senator. You know who you are, but I want you to be commended officially: Holly Hinds, Barbara Sheldon, Dana-Marie Salvatore, Beverly Gardner, Shannon Kennedy, Nancy Pyth and Pat Stebbins. You and your children are the heroes of this story.

Thank you families, providers, legislators and all who played a role in this fabulous victory!!!!

For more information on this bill, as well as information pertaining to youth suicide, please see below.

Resources:

Information on Youth Suicide

[NAMI's Enews on the Introduction of this legislation in the Senate](#)

[Read the Bill as passed by Congress \(pdf\)](#)

All my best,
Ann Nelson
Co-Chair Public Policy Committee
NAMI-CT