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Carlucci & Rivera Release Senate Report on Troubling Suicide Crisis in NYS

(Albany, NY) – Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Westchester) and Senator Gustavo Rivera (D-Bronx) released a joint report today highlighting a troubling suicide crisis in NYS, which is affecting people from all ethnicities, genders, and age groups across our state.

The report cites that suicide is the 12th leading cause of death in New York and one person dies by suicide every five hours in the State. This year alone, three people committed suicide by jumping to their deaths from the Verrazano Narrows Bridge in New York City. Twelve NYPD officers committed suicide in 2019, including two retired officers, causing the Department to declare a mental health emergency. Reports are now public concerning the crisis of Black youths committing suicide at an alarming rate, and Latinas, LGBT people, white middle-aged men, Asian immigrants, and the elderly are experiencing devastating record high numbers of people committing suicide.

Carlucci, Chair of the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Committee, and Rivera, Chair of the Committee on Health issued the report's findings and recommendations after a public hearing on suicide and suicide prevention, which included testimony from more than 20 health and mental health professionals with organizations on the front lines of this crisis. A common theme observed in this testimony was ending the stigma of suicide. Advocates believe

breaking down the barrier of stigma associated with suicide and suicide ideation is vital to address this crisis.

Key findings in the report included that the NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH) must improve its ability to identify individuals at risk of suicide, more prevention must be focused in schools, hotlines where people can seek help must be improved, and stigma surrounding suicide must be addressed. To this end, the report suggested tracking more data about suicide, “to identify clusters, optimize services, design policies, and create messaging aimed at eliminating suicide attempts and death.”

“As a society, we are truly in crisis. More and more people are choosing suicide as a way to cope with depression, stress and grief,” **said State Senator David Carlucci**. “Senator Rivera and I issued this report with the intent of bringing comprehensive reforms to the table. Suicide can’t be hidden behind a curtain, but must be discussed and addressed before we lose more lives.”

“Senator Carlucci and I have a profound responsibility to support and expand suicide prevention efforts across our state. Our report is a comprehensive overview of the heartfelt testimony and unyielding dedication that experts and advocates shared with us at our Public Hearing,” **said State Senator Gustavo Rivera**. “These recommendations and insights will help us grow and develop initiatives that save lives and heal communities. I look forward to putting our agenda into action in collaboration with our fellow legislators.”

Further, recommendations from Carlucci’s and Rivera’s report, included: passing legislation to require Mental Health First Aid education in schools K-12 and colleges, establish a Black Youth Suicide Prevention Task Force, improve intake and discharge procedures when a person has a self-inflicted injury, continuing education for teachers, college administrators and staff in Youth Mental First Aid training, and specialized training for doctors and other medical professionals.

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