

March 22, 2017

Dear House Education Members:

My mental health illness started young. In the fourth grade, my elementary school teacher called me in to the hallway several times. I was regularly crying in school and although she tried, she couldn't get a handle on 'why'.

I insisted my family life was fine and I wasn't keeping any big (scary) secrets; all of this was true.

She finally concluded I must be getting teased, and lectured the class on why teasing was wrong. Despite not being right,

I adore that she cared.

I was suffering from the beginning stages of anxiety and depression, which went unchecked for any years. By junior high I become better at hiding my sadness. if the bill in front of you today had been enacted in my hometown ~30 years ago, I imagine I could have been saved a tremendous amount of pain.

Please pass this bill, intended to help in the diagnosis of of mental health illness at the earliest opportunity.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

April Toomey