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February 14, 2017

Dear Chairman and Honorable House and Senate Committee Members:

The Upper Sioux Community is in support of HF501 bill and SF776 to support appropriations for voice response suicide prevention and mental health crisis response program and text message suicide prevention and mental health crisis response program.

Stabilizing the availability of mental health crisis response programs, such as TXT4LIFE is a crucial prevention program and at times the primary intervention that an individual might have access to. Native Americans have the highest rates of suicide among any other race and in fact, 'Suicide rates are more than double, and Native teens experience the highest rate of suicide of any population group in the United States' (Center for Native American Youth, Aspen Institute, 2016). TXT4LIFE is a valuable resource that our Mental Health and Social Services team provide to our community and specifically, make available to our youth. Continued and expanded access to programs such as TXT4LIFE is critical and valuable within Native American communities, including the Upper Sioux Community.

Therefore, on behalf of one of the eleven Minnesota reservations, the Upper Sioux Community does support the HF501 and SF776 bills and encourages both the House and Senate to support passage.

Sincerely,

Kevin Jenvold  
Chairman