

CELEBRATING SPEAK UP, STAND UP, SAVE A LIFE CONFERENCE AND MOVEMENT

HON. RAUL M. GRIJALVA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 5, 2019

Madam Speaker, may this entry serve as enduring recognition of the impact created by the Speak Up, Stand Up, Save a Life conference and movement.

In Arizona, much like the rest of the country, student deaths from suicide have increased exponentially, and research has shown, many youth related deaths have been found to be preventable, if only people had the tools to make a difference. Dr. Lily Matos DeBlieux, superintendent of the Pendergast District, and Gina Godbehere, attorney, and Bureau Chief of the Maricopa County Attorney's office, met in Leadership West Class XXII, and worked collaboratively to create the Speak Up, Stand Up, Save a Life Conference in 2017, the only conference of its kind in Arizona.

Now in its fourth year, over 5,000 students, counselors, law enforcement, parents and education advocates came together in January 2019 at Grand Canyon University, to eradicate the stigma and consequences of bullying and to prevent teen suicide. Due to their efforts to help Arizona be a better place for this and future generations, police chiefs, and law enforcement officers from agencies throughout the state joined the effort and attended the conference, along with students, counselors, teachers, education advocates, and caring adults.

The daylong event inspired attendees to connect and create lasting solutions they can implement back at their schools. The conference offered students a chance to hear from local and national speakers on the difficult issues they face on a daily basis, both inside and outside of school. The conference is free of charge, thanks to sponsors and in-kind donations. What makes this youth conference unique is the outreach offered to the adults through the conference, implementation at the school sites, and follow-up family resource nights in the communities.

This vital project, educating and saving lives of youth in Arizona, is now active in 38 school districts in Arizona with a total of 158 schools participating. The January 2020 conference at Grand Canyon University will inspire youth and adults to be empowered, and make a difference in their schools, districts and communities.

The objective of this vital movement is to create a movement for students in schools with diverse populations and community partners to take back to their campuses and communities with the goal to inspire over 380,000 students to speak up, stand up and save lives.