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Ad Hoc Committee on Teen Mental Health Announced

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – Arizona House Speaker Rusty Bowers has appointed State Representative Joanne Osborne to chair a new Ad Hoc Committee on Teen Mental Health, which will take a substantive look into the issues and causes affecting teen mental health, including substance abuse, depression, and suicide, and to identify potential solutions and improvements.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Teen Mental Health, which will consist of members of the House of Representatives and of the community, is intended to research and review information regarding how substance abuse, bullying, and social media may affect mental health in Arizona’s youth, including teen suicide. The committee is to identify potential solutions and make recommendations to public and private agencies with the goal of addressing teen mental health issues and improving access to mental health care.

“Teenage children today are faced with tremendous stress and pressure along the path to adulthood, and far too many succumb to substance abuse and suicidal ideations,” said Representative Osborne. “Struggles because of the pandemic and social media aggravate the situation further. As a mother of four and a longtime mentor to young Arizonans, I am deeply concerned with this current state of teen mental health, and I am committed to using the legislative pulpit to draw public attention to this important issue. Recent tragedies further highlight the urgent need for solutions. This will be our committee’s endeavor.”

Other House members appointed to serve on the committee include Representative Travis Grantham (Vice Chair, R-12) and Representative Alma Hernandez (D-3). Community member appointments are expected to be made by the Speaker soon, to include a parent who has lost a child to suicide, a pediatrician, and representatives from the education community, faith-based community, law enforcement, the Governor’s office, and the public.

The committee will begin a series of public hearings in June and will issue its findings and recommendations in a report in December. Additional information will be announced soon.

Joanne Osborne is a Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives serving Legislative District 13. She serves as chair of the House Health and Human Services Committee. Follow her on Twitter at @JoanneOsborne8.

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