

**2022 Morris County Walk to Fight Suicide Remarks
(September 17, 2022)**

Greetings Everyone. Welcome to the 2022 Morris County Walk to Fight Suicide. I am delighted to see so many of you here today.

A number of you who are joining us this afternoon are walking to remember a loved one lost to suicide. By being here you are allowing their memory to live on, and are honoring them in a most profound and meaningful way.

I'd like to acknowledge as well those of you who have yourselves suffered personally from suicidal thoughts. We are so glad to have you join us in this immensely important fight. Your presence, and your openness, allows others who are similarly confronting this painful challenge to know they are not alone in their struggle.

By participating today, each and every one of you is sending the message that *mental health* is as real a concern in our everyday lives as *physical health*. You are sending the message that reaching out for help in the case of one's mental or emotional struggles is always and forever the *strong* thing to do. Indeed, you are showing others that suicide, which is currently the twelfth leading cause of death in the United States, can no longer be swept under the rug. For, we will simply not allow it to be hidden. It must be confronted. Openly. And with care, understanding, and compassion.

My friends, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (the AFSP) is the leading non-profit organization dedicated to saving lives, and bringing hope to those affected by suicide. Your support today will help this amazing organization develop and share educational programs like *Talk Saves Lives, More Than Sad, and It's Real*. The AFSP's *Interactive Screening Program* gives students, workers, and veterans a safe and secure way to reach out for support, when in need. Your generosity will also assist the many people affected by suicide through such additional programs as *Healing Conversations*, as well as the AFSP's annual *Survivor Day* events.

And thanks to supporters like you, the new *988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline* from the AFSP's partners at the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is now available nationwide. Through the *988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline*, free, confidential help for those in crisis is now closer than ever before.

Because of all of you, the AFSP is able to wage its truly critical fight for a day when *no one* will die by suicide. Together, we *can* make a difference. Together, we *will* make a difference. Together, we will *stop* suicide once and for all.

I myself am here because of the loss to suicide of someone who was very close to me. He was my best friend in college. It was tragic. It devastated a great many family members and friends. And I never want to experience that kind of loss again.

We can, and we must, end this dreadful scourge affecting far too many of us all across this great nation of ours. I fervently believe that together we can do just that. We can end suicide. We have the *power*. We have the *will*. We have the *desire*. We have the *commitment*. We have the *conviction*. And we have the *passion*.

And so, thank you, truly, for coming out today and demonstrating your deep commitment to this most important cause, this quest, this dream, and this all-important goal, namely of ridding our society of the woeful curse of suicide once and for all.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Your support is so tremendously, and most deeply, appreciated.