



## Missouri House of Representatives

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**May 29, 2025**

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### **State Rep. Tricia Byrnes Urges Action on Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Services Following Local Tragedy**

**JEFFERSON CITY, Mo.** – Following the tragic loss of life through recent suicides in Representative Tricia Byrnes' hometown of Wentzville, she is calling for action to reform and improve mental health response and mental health crisis prevention.

"Yesterday's loss in Wentzville is a sobering reminder that Missouri's mental health care system is broken. The reality is heartbreaking and Missourians deserve better," Rep. Byrnes, R-Wentzville, said. "We need change, and we need it now."

Rep. Byrnes emphasized the urgent need to address the structural flaws in Missouri's mental health system, including, but not limited to:

- The state prison system remains the only facility with long-term psychiatric beds, meaning individuals often must be incarcerated before receiving necessary treatment.
- Law enforcement is overstretched, expected to fill the roles of clinician, caseworker, and crisis responder—too many times when they successfully bring a person in mental health crisis to a hospital, the patient is almost immediately released leading to a revolving door with a downwards spiral.
- The legal threshold for mental health intervention is dangerously low. If someone can feed themselves, we say they're competent—even if they're living on the streets in a psychotic break. That's not freedom. That's abandonment.
- Resources for post-crisis stabilization are severely limited. In one recent case, a young man who survived a suicide attempt was discharged from medical care with no available psychiatric bed to transfer to.
- We can track an alcoholic's drinking with a court-ordered device, but we can't enforce a lifesaving 30-day injection on someone with schizophrenia who is medically noncompliant. Too often, they cycle through jails and ERs until they die-or hurt someone else. Only then do they qualify for treatment-in prison.
- The 988-crisis text line remains under scrutiny for serious safety and response gaps.

“We cannot let another life slip away while we wait for ‘The System’ to fix itself. It won’t. It’s up to us—to demand action, to stand together, and to be visible,” Byrnes said.

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### **Join the Movement: Mental Health Rally & Awareness Ride – June 7, 2025**

Rep. Byrnes is calling on community members to stand up for mental health reform and suicide prevention by participating in a public awareness event on **Saturday, June 7, 2025**:

#### **Mental Health Awareness Rally**

**8:00 a.m.**

**Location:** Sidewalk in front of Walgreens at the corner of West Pearce Blvd. and Wentzville Parkway  
Bring your signs and **wear green** to show support for mental health awareness.

#### **Support Ride for Mental Health - Vehicles and motorcycles welcome**

**8:00 a.m. – Meet at Wentzville Community Club**

**500 W Main St, Wentzville, MO 63385**

Ride departs at **8:30 a.m.** and will proceed through town to raise visibility and support for stronger mental health resources.

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### **Next Steps: From Visibility to Policy**

This is not just a rally—it’s the beginning of a movement. Volunteers and advocates will have the opportunity to attend a legislative event where they will participate in identifying and setting legislative goals.

“We need a mental health system that is proactive, not reactive,” Rep. Byrnes said.

*State Representative Tricia Byrnes, a Republican, represents part of St. Charles County (District 63) in the Missouri House of Representatives. She was elected to her first two-year term in November 2022. For more information, please contact Rep. Byrnes at 573-751-1460 or by email at [Tricia.Byrnes@house.mo.gov](mailto:Tricia.Byrnes@house.mo.gov).*

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