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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Office of School Safety Receives 10,000th Contact to Speak Up, Speak Out Tipline

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Justice Office of School Safety (OSS) today announced the Speak Up, Speak Out (SUSO) tipline has received its 10,000th contact since its inception on September 1, 2020. SUSO is a free statewide threat reporting tipline available to all Wisconsin schools. SUSO provides students with immediate, accessible confidential adult support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The willingness of bystanders to come forward with concerns for the wellness and safety of themselves or others is a key component of student health and violence prevention efforts in schools. SUSO harnesses the power of bystanders, addresses concerns early, and provides opportunities for early intervention and harm prevention.

In addition to SUSO being a proven effective tipline, SUSO is the hub that connects all OSS initiatives and the entry point where schools can access comprehensive services offered by OSS as well as local, state, and national partners.

“Reaching this milestone shows how much trust and confidence students and educators have in SUSO,” said Attorney General Josh Kaul. “By extending this impactful program beyond the end of 2024, our legislators can help keep kids safe in Wisconsin schools.”

SUSO is a powerful school safety tool. Of the 10,000 contacts received, many were tips that required immediate intervention from school officials and local law

enforcement, including nearly 200 concerns about planned school attacks, over 200 reports of guns or weapons, and over 350 related to suicide threats. SUSO prevents harm in Wisconsin schools.

Twenty three states, including Wisconsin, utilize anonymous tiplines. A [study](#) published in the journal *Pediatrics* on Jan. 17, 2024 analyzed North Carolina's tipline as an example and found it to be effective at identifying high-risk situations involving firearms. The study noted that since 2020 firearms are the leading cause of death of children and adolescents.

OSS and SUSO impacted every one of Wisconsin's 72 counties in 2023, in most cases providing multiple services. Counties have either used the SUSO tipline, received general school safety guidance, had participants in OSS training events and presentations, or received an OSS grant.

Students, parents, school staff, or any community members can submit a school safety concern or threat via the SUSO website, mobile phone application, or toll-free number.

SUSO reports can be made 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

- Online at speakup.widj.gov
- 1-800-MY-SUSO-1 (1-800-697-8761)
- Mobile app ([iOS/Android](#))

About the Office of School Safety

OSS was initially supported by more than \$2 million in federal grant funding from the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance. Wisconsin DOJ requested the legislature permanently fund OSS in the recent biennial budget, but the request went unfilled. After Wisconsin DOJ's request went unfilled by the legislature, Wisconsin DOJ re-allocated \$1,340,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funds to extend the operations of OSS including the Speak Up, Speak Out 24-hour tipline, critical incident response teams, and threat assessment consultation. The re-allocated money will fund OSS through the end of 2024.