

Hello all, my name is Peter, and I had a friend named John Hauser. In a certain light he was a mentor and leader to me as well. Being his friend was such a gift, and wish I could have been his friend forever. During the short tenure I knew him, we spent lots of time together pulling all nighters to drive down to Fargo to go to 24-hour diners, talk about shared classes and its assignments, and ultimately pledging the same fraternity. He was funny, witty, kind, and selfless. On October 18th, 2021, John Hauser took his own life. Ask anybody about his passing, and they will all say that they were blindsided by it. I will never forget where I was when I found out he was missing. No one knew that he was struggling, let alone what with.

For a long time I beat myself up on what could have been done to prevent what happened. How could I have been a better friend? Finally, I came to the conclusion that I could not have done anything, because John didn't want me to do anything. John wanted no one to know he was suffering because he was scared he wouldn't be able to live his dream of becoming a pilot. No one struggling with mental health should have to live in fear of trying to get help.. I'm not a professional, but I think that would make the situation worse. This fear and despair of not knowing where to go to feel better can take you down dark paths leading to much worse ends.

House Bill 1612 can completely change the trajectory of how mental health gets tackled in the aviation industry. It can save future lives. By enacting HB1612, a pilot who is struggling with mental health can reach out to a professional to get help, or least be in a safe space to talk to someone. There was a study of 1,616 pilots that asked if they had underreported information to their AME (aviation medical examiner), to which 3.3% of pilots stated they underreported mental health issues. Per the ND aeronautics commission, over 4,000 pilots live in North Dakota. If that same statistic was true, 130 pilots are suffering from mental health problems that ARE NOT reporting this to their AME. I urge all of you help save your peers who are pilots.

Thanks,

Peter Richards

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Study source:

Strand, Trond-Erik; Lystrup, Nora; Martinussen, Monica. "Under-Reporting of Self-Reported Medical Conditions in Aviation: A cross-Sectional Survey." *Aerospace Medicine and Human Performance* Volume 93 (April 2022): 376–383.