

May 9, 2019

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20002

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20002

The Honorable José Serrano
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Shaheen / Chairman Serrano and Ranking Member Aderholt:

As Congress works to finalize the Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, the organizations co-signing this letter strongly urge you to fund the bipartisan STOP School Violence Act (Division S, Title V of Public Law 115–141) at a level of \$125,000,000, a \$25,000,000 increase over FY19 funding. This increased funding will allow even more states, localities, and tribes to provide evidence-based violence prevention programming to students and teachers. We also urge continuance of the FY19 funding allotments and language, furthering the strong focus on evidence-based school violence prevention programs.

Every year, there are thousands of acts of youth violence in our schools, including suicide, assault, bullying, and homicide. Research shows that youth often display warning signs and signals before taking any of these violent actions, as the majority of both students who complete suicide and school shooters tell someone of their plans or give another warning sign.

We are all too familiar with the places where terrible tragedies have occurred around the country in the last ten years – such as Sandy Hook Elementary, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, or Santa Fe High School – but there are tragedies that occur every day around the country. In 2017, 6,769 Americans between ages 10-24 completed suicide – a rate of over 18 per day.

In March 2018, Congress passed the STOP School Violence Act, which gives our students and educators the tools and support to take proactive steps towards stopping these tragedies. Already, states, localities, school districts, and Indian tribes are using this essential funding to provide evidence-based programs to train school personnel and students to identify warning signs and prevent tragedies such as suicide, mental health crisis, and interpersonal violence; develop and operate school-based teams to help receive, triage, and intervene when warning signs are reported; and create and implement anonymous reporting systems, among other allowable uses.

These funds help ensure that our children are given the opportunity to learn in safe environments, and we strongly urge Congress to support this funding level and language for the STOP School Violence Act.

Sincerely,

2020 Mom

AASA, The School Superintendents Association

America SCORES

American Art Therapy Association

American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work

American Counseling Association

American Dance Therapy Association

American Federation of School Administrators

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

American Group Psychotherapy Association

American Psychiatric Association

American Psychoanalytic Association

Clinical Social Work Association

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy, and Action

EDGE Consulting Partners

First Focus Campaign for Children

Forum for Youth Investment

Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice

National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health

National Association for Children's Behavioral Health

National Association of Elementary School Principals

National Association of School Psychologists

National Association of Secondary School Principals

National Association of Social Workers

National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors

National Council for Behavioral Health

National Eating Disorders Association

National PTA

Sandy Hook Promise

School Social Work Association of America

SchoolHouse Connection

The Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare

The Trevor Project

Treatment Communities of America