

July 17, 2024

Dear Senator,

On behalf of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), AASA, the School Superintendents Association, and the undersigned 44 education and mental health organizations, we urge you to support floor amendment 2529 to S. 4638, the FY25 National Defense Authorization Act, and consider its inclusion in any Managers Package that moves to the floor.

This amendment authorizes The CARE for Student Mental Health Act, which codifies and clarifies the purpose of the Mental Health Services Professionals Demonstration Grant (renamed the Strengthening the Pipeline of Mental Health Providers Program) and the School Based Mental Health Services Grant Program (SBMH). These grants, which received significant investments via the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, are critical to addressing the youth mental health crisis and ensuing ongoing comprehensive school safety efforts. The Mental Health Services Professionals grant increases the number and diversity of properly trained and fully credentialed school based mental health providers through partnerships between institutions of higher education and LEAs. SBMH provides financial support to high needs LEAs to hire new and retain existing school mental health staff to improve their capacity to meet the mental health needs of all students and make progress toward recommended staffing ratios of school psychologists, counselors, and social workers.

Importantly, the CARE for Student Mental Health Act creates greater equity in the distribution of future grant awards, addresses key concerns raised by prospective applicants and school leaders, and remedies major inefficiencies in the grant application process that have made it challenging for students and educators in small and rural districts, including those who serve military connected families, to benefit from these federal investments.

We urge to you support this amendment. Please reach out to Kelly Vaillancourt (kvaillancourt@naspweb.org) and Sasha Pudelski (spudelski@aasa.org) with any questions.

Association of Educational Service Agencies
American Atheists
American Federation of School Administrators
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Music Therapy Association
American Psychological Association
American School Health Association
Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO)
CASEL
Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Children and Screens: Institute of Digital Media and Child Development
Committee for Children
Common Sense Media
Council for Exceptional Children
Council of Administrators of Special Education

Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy, & Action
EDGE Consulting Partners
First Focus Campaign for Children
GLSEN
Inseparable
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Mental Health America
MENTOR
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of School Nurses
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of State Boards of Education
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Federation of Families
National PTA
National Rural Education Association
National Rural Education Association Coalition
National School Boards Association
Sandy Hook Promise
School Social Work Association of America
School-Based Health Alliance
SchoolHouse Connection
The Carter Center
The Education Trust
The Kennedy Forum
The National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS)
Young Women's Project