



National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Inc.

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March 6, 2018

United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressmen,

The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), is the national nonprofit organization that represents the state directors of special education in the states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Department of Defense Education Agency, the Bureau of Indian Education, the U.S. territories and Freely Associated States.

We write to provide to provide our support for the Students, Teachers, and Officers Preventing (STOP) School Violence Act of 2018 (H.R. 4909).

Every day students, both with and without disabilities across our nation endure acts of violence ranging from bullying to homicide and suicide. Many of these acts of violence could be prevented. We know that youth often display a series of signs and signals before harming themselves or others. Research shows that youth often display warning signs and signals before taking any action, with 80% of school shooters telling someone of their plans (69% telling more than one person), and 70% of those who complete suicide tell someone of their plans or give another warning sign. Despite these warning signs being present, few of our students, school personnel, and local law enforcement are equipped with the necessary skills to identify the signals and threats to help prevent school violence, while others simply fail to report what they are seeing.

The STOP School Violence Act reauthorizes and amends the Department of Justice's Secure Our Schools Act (P.L. 106-386) to provide state and local government grants to train our local law enforcement, school personnel, and students in evidence-based practices that improve early intervention and stop violence in our schools before it happens. Additionally, the legislation provides support for the development and operation of school threat assessment & intervention teams, as well as anonymous reporting systems to improve the reporting and triage of threats. The STOP School Violence Act builds off of the lessons learned and research in school safety over the last two decades, including evidence-based programs from the National Institute of Justice's Comprehensive School Safety Initiative, transitioning DOJ funding from research to full implementation of violence prevention programming within schools nationwide.

We applaud you for your bipartisan work to fill the gap in school violence prevention. Thank you for your commitment to protecting the health and safety of all students. NASDSE supports the STOP School Violence Act of 2018 and urges its passage.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact NASDSE's Director of Government Relations, Valerie Williams, at Valerie.Williams@nasdse.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

Theron (Bill) East, Jr.

Bill East
Executive Director