

June 2, 2009

The Honorable Grace Napolitano
U.S. House of Representatives
1610 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tim Murphy
U.S. House of Representatives
322 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Napolitano and Murphy:

The undersigned organizations applaud your re-introduction of the Mental Health in Schools Act of 2009, HR 2531, and pledge our strong support to enact this initiative. We share your vision for expanding the availability of comprehensive school-based mental health services for students in communities across America. Undoubtedly, healthier students learn and perform better and a key component of academic success is addressing the mental health of our nation's children and adolescents.

According to a February 2009 Institute of Medicine report on mental health prevention and promotion, 50 percent of individuals with a mental health diagnosis first experience it by age 14, 75 percent by age of 24. Given the early onset of emotional and behavioral disorders and their subsequent indirect and direct costs (estimated at \$247 billion annually), investments in early intervention programs, especially those that better connect health and education systems, should be prioritized.

HR 2531 is needed to break the cycle of failure that is a result of ignored mental health problems. This important legislation builds on the highly-effective program known as the Safe Schools/Healthy Students program, it authorizes competitive grants to local school districts to assist them in early interventions and referrals for treatment, it provides supports for students and their families, and it allows for staff training to be culturally and linguistically appropriate.

We commend you for re-introducing the Mental Health in Schools Act of 2009. Your bill recognizes that mental disorders are prevalent among our nation's youth and the introduction of your bill is an important step in addressing our nation's mental health crisis among youth. We strongly urge the House to pass this legislation as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

111th Congress Sign-ons
Alliance for Children and Families
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

American Counseling Association
American Dance Therapy Association
American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
American Psychoanalytic Association
American Psychological Association
Anxiety Disorders Association of America
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare (AABH)
Association for the Advancement of Psychology
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Center for Clinical Social Work
Child Welfare League of America
Children & Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)
Clinical Social Work Association
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action
Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
Mental Health America
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association for Rural Mental Health (NARMH)
National Association of Mental Health Planning and Advisory Councils
National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems
National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders – ANAD
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Departments of Special Education
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Association for Rural Mental Health (NARMH)
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Disability Rights Network
National PTA
School Social Work Association of America
Suicide Prevention Action Network USA (SPAN USA)
Therapeutic Communities of America
Tourette Syndrome Association
United Neighborhood Centers of America
US Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association