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**ASCA Issues Statement Supporting Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Act**

*Bicameral legislation would provide funding to states to address the staffing ratios of school counselors, school psychologists and school social workers.*

**For immediate release – September 18, 2019**

**ALEXANDRIA, VA** – The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) voices support for Senate Bill 2499 and House Bill 4381 to increase the number of school counselors in our nation’s schools.

ASCA applauds the efforts of Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), Rep. Katherine Clark (D-Mass.) and the original cosponsors to re-introduce the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Act. The program would provide funding to states to address the current egregious staffing ratios of school counselors, school psychologists and school social workers. The current student-to-school counselor ratio is 455-to-1, nearly double the national recommendation of 250-to-1.

“Mental health care is essential health care, full stop. But as I meet with educators from across Oregon, one of the top concerns I hear is that our schools aren’t receiving the funding they need to deliver the counseling services students deserve,” Merkley said. “That’s unacceptable, and it’s putting the lives of our children at risk. Now is the time for Congress to

commit to ensuring that every child in America has access to quality mental health care.”

The much-needed federal investment would supplement states’ efforts to increase comprehensive school counseling services to students to ensure students are equipped with social/emotional supports, academic and career development provided through a developmentally appropriate school counseling program.

### **About the American School Counselor Association**

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) professional organization based in Alexandria, Va. ASCA promotes student success by expanding the image and influence of school counseling through leadership, advocacy, collaboration and systemic change. ASCA helps school counselors guide their students toward academic achievement, career planning and social/emotional development to help today’s students become tomorrow’s productive, contributing members of society. Founded in 1952, ASCA has a network of 50 state and territory associations and a membership of more than 37,000 school counseling professionals. For additional information on the American School Counselor Association, visit [www.schoolcounselor.org](http://www.schoolcounselor.org).

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