

June 18, 2024

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen  
Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related  
Agencies  
The Capitol S-128  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,  
and Related Agencies  
The Capitol S-128  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hal Rogers  
Chair, House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related  
Agencies  
The Capitol H-310  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Matt Cartwright  
Ranking Member, House Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,  
and Related Agencies  
1036 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Shaheen, Ranking Member Moran, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Cartwright,

As the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress considers their Fiscal Year 2025 budget, we the 35 organizations who represent and care for student's safety urge you to fund the bipartisan STOP School Violence Act (Division S, Title V of Public Law 115—141) at a level of \$141,000,000 within the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, including prioritizing \$86,000,000 for the Bureau of Justice Assistance's (BJA) evidence-based school violence prevention, suicide prevention and mental health crisis intervention programming authorized under the Act.

Adequate funding for the STOP School Violence Act is essential to the safety of America's schools and students. In recent surveys, 38% of K-12 parents feared for their child's safety at school and one in seven parents said their child had expressed fear about school safety.<sup>1</sup> Millions of acts of youth violence, including suicide, threats, bullying, and homicide occur every year, affecting urban, suburban, and rural schools. In 2021, 9% of high school students did not go to school because of safety concerns at least once in the past month.<sup>2</sup>

Research shows that youth often display warning signs before taking any action, as 75% of school shooters and 70% of youth who complete suicide are reported to have told someone of their plans or have presented another warning sign.<sup>3</sup> Our students, teachers, and staff need the tools to help them recognize these warning signs and take proactive steps towards improving the physical and mental wellbeing of students.

This funding allows even more states, localities, and tribes to provide evidence-based violence prevention programming to students and teachers to identify warning signs and prevent tragedies such as suicide, mental health crises, and interpersonal violence. These grants will also be used to develop and operate school-based teams to help receive, triage, and intervene when warning signs are present; and create and implement anonymous reporting systems, among other allowable uses.

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<sup>1</sup> Gallup Inc. (2023) "School Parent Safety Concerns Remain High in the U.S."

<sup>2</sup> Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021) *Youth Risk Behavior Survey*.

<sup>3</sup> United States Secret Service. Lina, Alathari. (2020) *MASS ATTACKS in PUBLIC SPACES -2019*.

These essential funds help ensure that our children are given the opportunity to learn in safe environments, and the evidence-based prevention programs funded through the STOP School Violence Act will provide students and teachers with needed support. We urge you to support increased funding and related report language for the STOP School Violence Act.

Sincerely,

AASA, The School Superintendents Association

AESA (Association of Educational Service Agencies)

AFT: Education, Healthcare, Public Services

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work

American Counseling Association

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

American Mental Health Counselors Association

American School Counselor Association

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Children's Hospital Association

Clinical Social Work Association

Committee for Children

Crisis Text Line

Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy and Action

EDGE Consulting Partners

First Focus Campaign for Children

Inseparable

International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses

Mental Health America

National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Association for Children's Behavioral Health

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

National Association of School Psychologists

National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)

National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors

National League for Nursing

Psychotherapy Action Network

REDC Consortium

Sandy Hook Promise

School Social Work Association of America

The Kennedy Forum

The Trevor Project

Vibrant Emotional Health

Youth Villages