

March 16, 2018

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
104 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
302 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Mental Health Groups Support of the STOP School Violence Act of 2018

Dear Senators Hatch and Klobuchar:

On behalf of the below national health organizations representing consumers, family members, advocates, professionals and providers, we are writing to provide our support for the Students, Teachers, and Officers Preventing (STOP) School Violence Act of 2018 (S. 2495).

Every day, students 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. The National Center for Education Statistics found that almost 21% of students, ages 12-18, reported experiencing some form of bullying while at school. In cases of suicide, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that about 80% of teens that attempt suicide give clear warning signs. 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 (34 U.S.C.A. § 10551 et. seq.) 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.

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 our students. We support the STOP School Violence Act of 2018 and urges its passage.

Sincerely,

2020 Mom

American Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry

American Art Therapy Association

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

American Group Psychotherapy Association

American Mental Health Counselors Association

American Occupational Therapy Association

American Psychiatric Association

American Psychoanalytic Association

Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Clinical Social Work Association

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

Eating Disorders Coalition

Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice

The Jewish Federations of North America

Mental Health America

National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Association for Children's Behavioral Health

National Association of Social Workers

National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors

National Eating Disorders Association

National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

Residential Eating Disorders Consortium

Sandy Hook Promise

School Social WORK Association of America

The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health

The National Council for Behavioral Health

The Trevor Project