



AMERICAN  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION  
Services, Inc.

February 28, 2019  
The Honorable Grace Napolitano  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Napolitano:

On behalf of the members and affiliates of the American Psychological Association (APA), I am pleased to express our strong support for the ***Mental Health Services for Students Act of 2019 (H.R. 1109)***, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to revise and extend projects relating to children and to provide access to school-based comprehensive mental health programs.

APA is the leading scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States, with more than 118,400 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants, and students as its members. Our mission is to advance the creation, communication and application of psychological knowledge to benefit society and improve people's lives.

There is strong research that links the mental, social and emotional health of students to their academic achievement. APA recognizes the critical role of safe, encouraging school environments to maximize student academic outcomes and that non-academic concerns, such as bullying, violence, and threats of violence, can harm a student's ability to focus on school work. Our recent report, *Stress in America: Generation Z*, finds that this generation is more likely than all others to report poor mental health but also more likely to seek help from professionals, such as psychologists<sup>1</sup>. All students, regardless of socioeconomic status, deserve access to qualified mental health professionals within schools, and we commend your strong leadership on this important issue.

By providing incentives for schools and communities to take a public health approach to expanding mental health services, your legislation will make a significant impact on children's health and academic achievement across the country. It will support comprehensive school-based mental health services, facilitate community partnerships, and provide training and interventions delivered by qualified behavioral health professionals. By fostering school-based partnerships between communities and school systems, this legislation makes clear that supporting behavioral health is a critical component to student success.

If we can provide any additional information, please have your staff contact Jennifer Smulson, Senior Legislative and Federal Affairs Officer, at [jmulson@apa.org](mailto:jmulson@apa.org) or (202) 336-5945.

Sincerely,

Arthur C. Evans, Jr., PhD  
Chief Executive Officer

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<sup>1</sup> American Psychological Association (2018). *Stress in America: Generation Z*. *Stress in America™ Survey*.