



July 17, 2019

The Honorable Grace Napolitano
U.S. House of Representatives
32nd Congressional District
1610 Longworth Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Napolitano,

Hathaway-Sycamores is writing to convey its strong support for H.R. 1109, the Mental Health Services for Students Act of 2019. We are grateful for your unwavering commitment to improving the access to mental health services for all students on school campuses. According to the California Health Care Foundation's analysis, one in eight teens indicated a major depressive episode in 2014-2015. In 2015, one out of every nine high school females in the state attempted suicide. These two statistics and other data highlight the stressors and challenges facing students in today's climate. Increased investment in programs and models (that are supported by research) to expand comprehensive student mental health services is critical if we want to improve the well-being of all students. H.R. 1109 proposes to expand the Project AWARE State Educational Agency Grant Program to include increased career development of school personnel, engagement of family members through trainings, implementation of universal evidence based screening of students for mental health disorders, assistance to communities for trauma/violence, and strengthen partnerships between community based organizations and school districts. We believe that passage of H.R.1109 represents an important step to transforming school campuses so that quality mental health services are offered in a timely manner to students.

As a community-based organization in the 32nd Congressional District, Hathaway-Sycamores offers a range of services including mental health treatment, child welfare programs, educational support services, and housing support. While the organization has been known for serving largely children and families, Hathaway-Sycamores has expanded its services to the adult population and experienced rapid growth in its housing programs for young adults. Since 1997, Hathaway-Sycamores has been committed to providing school based services; we now have full time staff working collaboratively with school personnel on over 30 campuses, representing seven school districts/SELPA's. Based on our organization's history and experience, we share your vision and commitment to helping all students access culturally appropriate mental health services on school campuses, enhancing the collaboration between school districts and community based organizations, and building greater resiliency in the students' families and surrounding communities.

Sincerely,

Debra Manners, LCSW
President and Chief Executive Officer