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June 14, 2019

The Honorable Grace F. Napolitano
U.S. House of Representatives
1610 Longworth
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Napolitano:

We are writing to express support for H.R. 1109, the Mental Health Services for Student Act, which would provide \$200.0 million in competitive grants to establish school-based mental health services for students. This bill would provide critical education to the entire community, including students and their families, teachers, administrators, and support personnel, on the warning signs and symptoms of mental illness to help identify and treat mental health issues before they escalate.

Alarming statistics on major depressive episodes and suicide attempts among youth clearly demonstrate the immediate need for expanded access to mental health services. According to a recent Journal of Abnormal Psychology study, rates of major depressive episodes among adolescents aged 12-17, increased 52 percent between 2005 and 2017. The study found a similarly high increase in rates of major depressive episodes among young adults aged 18-25, increasing 63 percent between 2009 and 2017. When examining the rates of suicide attempts between 2008-2017, the study found a 22 percent increase among young adults aged 18-19, 87 percent increase among young adults aged 20-21, and 108 percent increase among young adults aged 22-23.

The County of Los Angeles recognizes the need for expanded mental health services for young people. Recently, the Board passed the Los Angeles County Community Schools Initiative, which identifies several high school districts to implement a pilot program that provides onsite mental health services on school campuses, in addition to other coordinated regional efforts. The Department of Mental Health is leading this initiative, in coordination with the Los Angeles County Office of Education and school administrators.

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H.R. 1109 is critical legislation to help expand critical mental health services for our youth.

We appreciate your leadership on this important issue.


Sincerely,



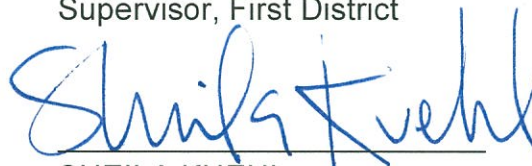
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