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May 21, 2019

The Honorable Grace F. Napolitano  
United States House of Representatives  
1610 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Katko  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2457 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-3224

Dear Representatives Napolitano and Katko:

On behalf of our three million members and the 50 million students they serve, we are pleased to support the Mental Health Services for Students Act of 2019 (H.R. 1109/S. 1112), which would expand access to school-based comprehensive mental health programs nationwide. In particular, we are pleased that the bill would:

- Provide on-site behavioral health services for K-12 students at no charge to them or their families
- Provide for comprehensive professional development for educators and other school staff
- Support and implement services that are culturally and linguistically appropriate
- Help local communities develop policies to address the impact of trauma, including violence, on the mental health of children and adolescents

One in five children in America suffers from a mental or brain-based illness, according to the [U.S. Surgeon General](#). Data from the [National Center for Health Statistics](#) show that over the last two decades, suicide rates have doubled among Americans age 10 to 14. Among 2.2 million adolescents aged 12 to 17 who reported a major depressive episode, [nearly 60 percent did not receive any treatment](#). Most go untreated because they either cannot afford care, lack access, do not know anyone they can turn to for help, or are too embarrassed and ashamed to ask for help.

Every child deserves the chance for a healthy start in life, including treatment for mental illnesses that impact the ability to learn and succeed in school. We welcome the opportunity to help make that happen by supporting the Mental Health Services for Students Act of 2019.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association