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May 18, 2023

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

The Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick  
U.S. House of Representatives  
271 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Napolitano and Fitzpatrick:

On behalf of the 3 million members of the National Education Association and the 50 million students they teach and support, we thank you for your leadership on and introduction of the Mental Health Services for Students Act.

Numerous studies confirm what NEA members know firsthand: Our communities and schools do not have the resources to deal with the mental health illnesses and disorders students face. These issues can keep students from focusing and doing well in school, and—if untreated—could persist and even worsen later in life. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s “[Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Data Summary & Trends Report](#),” in 2021, more than 4 in 10 students, or 42 percent, felt persistently sad or hopeless, and nearly one-third, 29 percent, experienced poor mental health. More than 1 in 5, or 22 percent, seriously considered suicide; 10 percent *attempted* suicide. These feelings were more pronounced in LGBTQ+ students, 45 percent of whom reported seriously considering suicide.

Additionally, the [American Academy of Family Physicians](#) reported in 2019 that as many as 1 in 6 children ages 6-17 had a treatable mental health disorder such as depression, anxiety, or attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, but nearly half the children received no counseling or treatment. Given what our nation has faced in the years since that finding—including the pandemic and the epidemic of mass shootings in schools and elsewhere—the prevalence of mental health disorders among children is probably even higher today. NEA members support the Mental Health Services for Students Act because it would:

- Expand access to comprehensive on-site mental health care services for students and their communities;
- Promote positive mental health education and support for parents, siblings, and other family members of children with mental health disorders, as well as concerned members of the community; and
- Provide comprehensive, culturally and linguistically appropriate services to support students in need of mental health care and those at-risk for behavioral mental health disorders.

Thank you for leading on this critical issue. We look forward to working with you and moving forward.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association