

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 22, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2322 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member Walden:

We are witnessing how fear and anxiety about the coronavirus can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions for our constituents, especially children. The National Institute of Mental Health reports that one in five youth already experience some type of mental health disorder that can cause significant challenges at home, school, and their community. Yet, prior to this public health emergency, only 10 percent of children and adolescents ages 3 to 17-years-old received any treatment or counseling from a mental health professional. That is why we strongly encourage you to include H.R. 1109, the Mental Health Services for Students Act, in the next coronavirus package.

The bill would provide \$200 million in competitive grants for public schools across the country to partner with local mental health professionals to establish comprehensive mental health services for students. Dr. Anthony Fauci, the Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, testified in May before the Senate on the prospect of reopening school buildings and said, “We don’t know everything about this virus, and we really better be very careful, particularly when it comes to children”. While schools work to navigate this pandemic, it is also important that we provide them with the resources to create a mental health plan to reach their students during this stressful time.

H.R. 1109 is based on the successful Youth Suicide Prevention Program in Los Angeles County and would provide grant funding for public schools to ensure the long-term availability of mental health services for students. Regular classes will eventually resume and according to the CDC, children may feel upset or have other strong emotions after an emergency. How a child reacts can vary depending on their age, previous experiences, and how that child typically copes with stress.

The Heroes Act does provide \$100 Million for Project AWARE to identify students and connect them with mental health services and \$90 billion in additional grants for states to support schools, which could be used for counseling, mental health services, and family engagement efforts. However, the effects of this pandemic will not easily disappear. We need to ensure the long-term availability of mental health services for students, which H.R. 1109 would accomplish.

H.R. 1109 has 131 bipartisan co-sponsors and has the support of 60+ mental health organizations, universities, local governments and teacher unions. It is now time to act on this bill, which has had broad support for decades.

We would truly appreciate your continued commitment to mental health by including H.R. 1109 the Mental Health Services for Students Act in any future coronavirus stimulus packages.

Sincerely,



Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress



John Katko
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

Cindy Axne
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress

Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress

Ted Deutch
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

Angie Craig
Member of Congress

Susan Wild
Member of Congress

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress

Jennifer González-Colón
Member of Congress

Darren Soto
Member of Congress

Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress

Doris Matsui
Member of Congress

Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

David Trone
Member of Congress

Susie Lee
Member of Congress

Deb Haaland
Member of Congress

Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

Filemon Vela
Member of Congress

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

Josh Harder
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas
Member of Congress

Joseph D. Morelle
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress

Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress

Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress

Scott Peters
Member of Congress

Seth Moulton
Member of Congress

Debbie Mucarsel-Powell
Member of Congress

Abby Finkenauer
Member of Congress

Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress

Katie Porter
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress

Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress

Maxine Waters
Member of Congress

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Xochitl Torres Small
Member of Congress

Jason Crow
Member of Congress

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress

Brenda L. Lawrence
Member of Congress

Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress