Senators Introduce Bipartisan, NASP-Led “CARE for Student Mental Health Act”

NASP Endorses Critical Legislation to Address Nationwide Shortage of School Psychologists

Bethesda, MD—The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) proudly endorses the “Creating Access to Resources in Education for Student Mental Health Act” (CARE for Student Mental Health Act), a vital piece of legislation aimed at addressing the nationwide shortage of school psychologists and other school-based mental health professionals that will increase equitable access to comprehensive school mental health services. NASP worked closely with leaders on Capitol Hill to develop this timely and critical bill, which addresses key concerns raised by our members and other school leaders.

Introduced by Senators John Cornyn, Maggie Hassan, Kyrsten Sinema, Jon Tester, and Thom Tillis, the CARE for Student Mental Health Act takes a crucial step towards bolstering mental health support in our nation’s schools. This legislation fully authorizes, and makes key improvements to, the Mental Health Services Professionals Demonstration Grant (MHSP) and the School Based Mental Health Services Grant Program (SBMH), the only federal grants specifically intended to increase the number and diversity of properly trained, fully credentialed school psychologists and other school-based mental health service providers. These grants, which were created with NASP’s leadership and later expanded in the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, are currently helping more than 400 school districts better meet the mental and behavioral health needs of their students.

“Far too many young people struggle with their mental health, and far too many schools lack the resources to recognize and care for students who may be in crisis,” said Sen. Cornyn. “To break this viscous cycle, our legislation would help connect schools with the potentially life-saving mental health resources provided by the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act to hire additional school psychologists and invest in the wellbeing of their students.”

“School psychologists are essential professionals who support student’s mental and behavioral health, which is foundational to their learning and lifelong success,” said Dr. Andrea Clyne, NASP President. “Despite our recommendation of a 1:500 ratio of school psychologists to students, the current nationwide ratio is more than double this recommendation, leaving many students without access to the mental health supports they need. This legislation will help to close this gap and ensure that every student has access to the mental health supports they deserve. We thank Senators Cornyn, Hassan, Sinema, Tester, and Tillis for their leadership and for their commitment to helping children thrive in school and throughout life.”

As a recent survey of NASP members indicated, addressing the shortages of school psychologists and other school-based mental health providers is a top priority amid an unprecedented youth mental health crisis. Urgent action is needed, and NASP urges Congress to swiftly pass the CARE for Student Mental Health Act to address this pressing issue.
For immediate release from the National Association of School Psychologists

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About NASP

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is a professional association representing more than 25,000 school psychologists, graduate students, and related professionals throughout the United States and an additional 25 countries worldwide. As the world’s largest organization of school psychologists, NASP works to advance effective practices to improve students’ learning, behavior, and mental health. Our vision is that all children and youth thrive in school, at home, and throughout life. Further information is available at www.nasponline.org.