STRENGTHENING SCHOOL SAFETY THROUGH PREVENTION OF BULLYING

JOINT HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTHY FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

AND THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD, ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR

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STRENGTHENING SCHOOL SAFETY THROUGH PREVENTION OF BULLYING

Wednesday, July 8, 2009
U.S. House of Representatives
Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities
Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education
Committee on Education and Labor
Washington, DC

The subcommittees met, pursuant to call, at 10:04 a.m., in room 2175, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Carolyn McCarthy [chairwoman of the Healthy Families and Communities Subcommittee] presiding.

Present from the Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee: Representatives Kildee, Payne, Scott, Davis, Loebsack, Pierluisi, Woolsey, Hinojosa, Sablan, Castle, and Petri.

Present from the Healthy Families and Communities Subcommittee: Representatives McCarthy, Scott, Tonko, Platts, Guthrie, and Roe.

Also present: Representatives Andrews and Sanchez.

Staff present: Ali Al Falahi, Staff Assistant; Curtis Ellis, Legislative Fellow; Fred Jones, Staff Assistant, Education; Jessica Kahanek, Press Assistant; Lillian Pace, Policy Advisor, Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education; Rachel Racusen, Communications Director; Melissa Salmanowitz, Press Secretary; Margaret Young, Staff Assistant, Education; Kim Zarish-Becknell, Policy Advisor, Subcommittee on Healthy Families; Stephanie Arras, Minority Legislative Assistant; James Bergeron, Minority Deputy Director of Education and Human Services Policy; Robert Borden, Minority General Counsel; Cameron Coursen, Minority Assistant Communications Director; Kirsten Duncan, Minority Professional Staff Member; Susan Ross, Minority Director of Education and Human Services Policy; and Linda Stevens, Minority Chief Clerk/Assistant to the General Counsel.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY [presiding]. I want to recognize my colleague, Representative Linda Sanchez. She is going to be attending the hearing, and I ask unanimous consent for her to sit on the dais to listen to the testimony and ask questions.

Welcome, Linda.

I now recognize myself, followed by the Healthy Families and Communities Ranking Member Todd Platts, then Chairman Dale Kildee and Ranking Member Castle of the Early Childhood Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee.

I would like to welcome our witnesses to the hearing on strengthening school safety in our schools. I spent over 30 years as a nurse, and I have seen firsthand what violence can do to students and to their families.

I came to Congress as a result of violence, and I have worked for years to try to reduce violence in our schools and in our country. Throughout this hearing we will explore the different areas of concern we have related to school safety and ideas on how to address them.

I want to take a moment to give a special thanks to my colleagues Chairman Kildee and Ranking Members Platts and Ranking Member Castle. Each of you has had a great interest in keeping our young people safe, and I appreciate all the hard work you have done on this issue and on this hearing.

While the overwhelming number of schools in this country are safe, it is a parent's worst nightmare to send a child to school only to learn the child has become the victim of a crime or other incident. We see acts of bullying that quickly escalate into outbreaks of violence. As a parent, knowing your child has been the victim of bullying can be heartbreaking. So, too, can learning that your child is a bully.

These days, bullying and school violence can have dire consequences. Nearly one-third of youth are bullied at least once a month. Six out of 10 American teens witness bullying at least once a day.

For children in grades six through 10, nearly one in six, or 3.2 million, are victims of bullying each day, and 3.7 million children are bullies. And a lot of these children won't even go to school because of those incidents.

Often acts of bullying can extend beyond the halls of our school buildings and have found a new home on the Internet. The emotional and physical impacts of bullying have become more severe than ever before, and we as parents need to be proactive in dealing with serious problem.

Students cannot learn and teachers cannot teach in environments that aren't safe, or if they are frightening. Schools should be sanctuaries for our children to learn and get the tools they need to succeed in life, not places where children have to worry about physical or emotional violence.

Growing up and going to school is hard enough. Fear and violence should not be added factors to bring more confusion and stress. The communities and school districts that were once immune to violence are now being forced to confront it head-on.

On occasion we have seen students referred to the juvenile justice system for what used to be considered disciplinary infractions. Something must be done to reverse these trends and protect students and teachers alike. One of the problems I am concerned about is what do we actually know? How much violence is actually occurring in schools?

Accurate data enables administrators and policymakers to assess the impact of school safety programs. A 2006 report from my home state of New York highlighted this issue. The New York comptroller's office found that at schools they had surveyed more than 80 percent of the documented incidents that were not reported to the state, including serious offenses such as sexual assault in the use of a weapon.

There has been much speculation about why there is underreporting. Our concern is that labeling a school as dangerous is a terrible stigma and may even be misleading in certain cases. We need to change the labeling.

We also need to enhance the source of information. The primary source of federal school crime and violence data is the annual Indicators of School Crime and Safety report. The Indicators report is based on surveys and research, but does not include law enforcement data.

While the current data available is valuable, I believe it must be enhanced. A 5-year study by the FBI on crime in schools and colleges was released in October 2007. This study emphasizes the contribution incident-based data can bring to the table when we are looking at crime in our schools.

Without objection I would like to submit a copy of this report for the record. Hearing, none, I submit it.

[The report may be accessed at the following Internet address:]

http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/schoolviolence/2007/schoolviolence.pdf

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Chairwoman MCCARTHY. By increasing the accuracy of school violence reporting, we can make sure federal dollars are going to these schools that truly need it most.

I am working to allot federal dollars for local school emergency preparedness planning. This is why I will be reintroducing legislation that calls for more accuracy, accountability and transparency in the reporting requirements for school safety.

Another theme that I think is important and that you will be hearing running through this hearing is that effective safety efforts must include input between a variety of interested parties, especially the students.

The students know what is happening and what is going on in schools. They know what is going on with their peers, and often before adults do. They are critical partners in any school safety efforts, and I look forward to hearing ideas on this.

Violence and bullying prevention is necessary to a successful academic career. We need to take these threats seriously and we must act on them to prevent further tragedies.

I want to thank you all for being here, and I look forward to your testimony.

I now recognize the distinguished ranking member of the Healthy Families and Communities Subcommittee, Mr. Platts, for his opening statement.

Mr. Platts?

[The statement of Mrs. McCarthy follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Carolyn McCarthy, Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities

I'd like to welcome our witnesses to this hearing on strengthening safety in schools.

As a nurse for over 30 years, I have seen firsthand what violence does to students and their families. I came to Congress as a result of violence, and I have worked for years to prevent it.

Through this hearing we will explore the different areas of concern we have related to school safety and ideas on how to address them.

I want to take a moment to give a special thanks to my colleagues Chairman Kildee and Ranking Members Platts and Castle. Each of you has a great interest in keeping our young people safe and I appreciate all the hard work you have done on this issue and on the hearing.

While the overwhelming number of schools in this country are safe, it is a parent's worst nightmare to send a child to school only to learn that the child has become the victim of a crime or other incident. We see acts of bullying that quickly escalate into outbreaks of violence.

As a parent, knowing your child has been the victim of bullying can be heartbreaking, so too can learning that your child is a bully.

These days, bullying and school violence can have dire consequences. Often, acts of bullying can extend beyond the halls of our school buildings and has found a new home on the internet. The emotional and physical impacts of bullying have become more severe than ever and we as parents need to be proactive in dealing with this serious problem.

Students cannot learn and teachers cannot teach in environments that are unsafe and frightening. Schools should be sanctuaries for our children to learn and get the tools they need to succeed in life, not places where children have to worry about physical or emotional violence.

Growing up and going to school is hard enough, fear and violence should not be added factors that bring more confusion and stress. Communities and school districts that were once immune to violence are now being forced to confront it head on.

On occasion we have seen students referred to the juvenile justice system for what used to be considered a disciplinary infraction. Something must be done to reverse these trends and protect students and teachers alike.

One of the problems I am concerned about is that we do not know how much violence is actually occurring in schools. Accurate data enables administrators and policy makers to assess the impact of school safety programs.

A 2006 report from my home state of New York highlighted this issue. The New York Comptroller's Office found that at schools they had surveyed more than 80 percent of the documented incidents were not reported to the State, including serious offenses such as sexual assault and the use of a weapon.

There has been much speculation about why there is underreporting. One concern is that labeling a school as dangerous has a terrible stigma and may even be misleading in certain cases. We need to change the labeling. We also need to enhance the source of incident information.

The primary source of federal school crime and violence data is the annual, "Indicators of School Crime and Safety," report. The Indicators report is based on surveys and research, but does not include law enforcement data. While the current data available is valuable, I believe it must be enhanced.

A 5 year study by the FBI on crime in schools and colleges was released in October 2007. This study emphasized the contribution incident-based data can bring to the table when we are looking at crime in schools. Without objection I would like to submit a copy of this report for the record.

By increasing the accuracy of school violence reporting, we can make sure federal dollars are going to those schools that truly need it most. I am also working to allocate federal dollars for local school emergency preparedness planning.

This is why I will be reintroducing legislation that calls for more accuracy, accountability and transparency in the reporting requirements for school safety.

Another theme that I think is important and that you will hear running through this hearing is that effective safety efforts must include a thought and input between a variety of interested parties, especially the students. The students know what's happening to them and to their peers, and often before adults do. They are critical partners in any school safety efforts and I look forward to hearing ideas this.

Violence and bullying prevention is necessary to a successful academic career. We need to take these threats seriously and we must act on them to prevent further tragedies.

Thank you all for being here and I look forward to your testimony.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you, Madam Chair. Honored to join you and Chairman Kildee and Ranking Member Castle, when he arrives, as well as other members. I will submit my written statement for the record, but do want to thank you for holding this very important hearing.

I think the safety of our nation's children is probably one of our most, if not most important responsibilities of government. And as a parent, I can tell you that I don't know if there is any more powerful feelings than that protective gene wanting to ensure my 10 and 13-year-old sons are safe and secure, and sometimes to the displeasure of my 10-year-old, who thinks I am overprotective in looking after him and his brother.

But as parents, when we send our children off to school, we are certainly wanting that environment to be a safe environment, and so today's hearing about safety in our schools, and especially the issue of bullying in our schools, is vitally important to us a feeling that responsibility of ensuring the safety of our children.

I do want to recognize our colleague, Ms. Sanchez, for her leadership on the issue and the sponsorship of legislation dealing with bullying in particular and how we can better assist our schools at the local level to fulfill that responsibility of ensuring safe learning environments for all of our nation's children.

I am honored again this morning to join with you in welcoming all eyewitnesses and to thank each and every one of you for your efforts, not just in your testimony here today, but in and day out for the work you are doing in your communities and for the good of our nation's children.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I yield back.

[The statement of Mr. Platts follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Todd Russell Platts, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities

Good morning. Welcome to our hearing. Today we are here to discuss the safety of our Nation's schools, with particular regard to bullying.

While the issue of bullying is not new, its ever-changing face has unfortunately kept it prevalent in our Nation's schools. According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services, between fifteen and twenty-five percent of United States students admitted to being bullied "sometimes" to "more often." While we are aware of the effect that bullying has on the mental health of students, attention is not always given to the significant impact bullying has on students' academic performance and physical health. Recent studies have shown that lower rates of school attendance can be attributed to bullying. Children who are bullied are also more likely to have lower self-esteem; higher rates of depression, loneliness, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. The physical effects of bullying can result in a multitude of health problems, including headaches, sleeping problems, and stomach ailments. Certain research even suggests that adults who were bullied as children are more likely than their non-bullied peers to suffer from depression and low self-esteem as adults.

Within the last ten years, the occurrences of bullying have become more difficult to detect as it has reached beyond the physical walls of our classrooms through the increased use of technology. E-mail, text messages, chat rooms and websites have provided a quick and often anonymous means of cyber bullying. In national surveys of ten to seventeen year-olds, twice as many youth indicated that they had been victims and perpetrators of online bullying in 2005 compared to 1999. Thirty-six percent of twelve to seventeen year-olds reported that someone said threatening or embarrassing things about them through e-mail, instant messages, web sites, chat rooms, or text messages.

A number of initiatives have been created to educate and prevent bullying. Organizations and educators have made parents more aware of the warning signs of bullying. Information has been made available to parents on how to prevent cyber bullying through increased monitoring of technology at home. Today, we will hear from Ms. Rona Kaufmann, Principal of William Penn Senior High School in my Congressional District. Ms. Kaufmann will share how the character education program implemented at her school has reduced the incidence of bullying.

I look forward to hearing the testimony from all of our witnesses today. As we move forward, it is vitally important that we all remain committed to ensuring that each and every student has the opportunity to be educated in an environment without fear, intimidation, or severe and pervasive insults. Thank you Chairwoman McCarthy.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you.

I now recognize the distinguished chairman of the Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, Mr. Kildee, for his opening statement.

Mr. KILDEE. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I am pleased to welcome all to this hearing on strengthening school safety through the prevention of bullying. As a father, a grandfather and a former teacher, I believe there is nothing more important than ensuring the safety of our schoolchildren.

But according to the National Center for Education Statistics, more than 75 percent of our nation's schools experienced a violent incident last school year. These incidents, which range from bullying to gang activity, threaten the safety of our children and seriously compromise the learning environment.

While one incident is one too many, we must do something immediately to address this widespread problem. We must better understand the causes of school violence and give our educators the tools they need to protect children from dangerous situations.

A safe learning environment is an essential component for the success of high-achieving schools. During today's hearing, we will hear testimony from a student and parent who have witnessed bullying firsthand, from experts in the field who train educators and prepare school districts to address the problems of school violence, and from a student who helps lead a successful school safety program in her own high school.

Each perspective represents an important voice in this discussion. We will hear about the importance of student and parent engagement, teacher training, development of emergency preparedness plans, community engagement in the collection of accurate data. All of these pieces play a critical role in a comprehensive approach to school safety.

We will also hear about the importance of teaching positive behavior skills, such as self-management, self-awareness and responsible decision-making. These social and emotional skills contribute to conflict resolution, reducing violent behavior in school settings.

I look forward to the testimony today and working with Chairwoman McCarthy, Ranking Member Platts and Castle, and all the members of the committee as we work to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and explore other critical school safety policies.

I now yield, if he is present, to our ranking Republican member of the Education Subcommittee, Mr. Castle.

Mr. Platts, I yield to you.

[The statement of Mr. Kildee follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Dale E. Kildee, Chairman, Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education

I'm pleased to welcome my fellow subcommittee members, the members of the Healthy Families and Communities Subcommittee, the public, and our witnesses to this hearing on "Strengthening School Safety through Prevention of Bullying."

As a father, a grandfather, and a former teacher, I believe there is nothing more important than ensuring the safety of our school children.

Yet, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, more than 75 percent of our nation's schools experienced a violent incident last school year.

These incidents—which range from bullying to gang activity—threaten the safety of our children and seriously compromise the learning environment.

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All of these pieces play a critical role in a comprehensive approach to school safety.

We will also hear about the importance of teaching positive behavioral skills such as self management, self awareness, and responsible decision-making.

These social and emotional skills contribute to conflict resolution, reducing violent behavior in school settings.

I look forward to the testimony today and working with Chairwoman McCarthy, Ranking Members Platts and Castle, and all the members of the Committee as we work to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and explore other critical school safety policies.

I now yield to Ranking Member Castle for his opening statement.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you, Mr. Kildee. Mr. Castle will be arriving shortly, but is detained and has asked me to submit his opening statement for the record, if no objection.

[The statement of Mr. Castle follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Michael N. Castle, Senior Republican Member,Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education

Good morning and thank you Chairwoman McCarthy and Chairman Kildee for holding this important hearing. I am pleased to be here today examining strengthening school safety through the prevention of bullying.

I am sure we can all agree that our nation's schools should be safe havens for teaching and learning, free of crime and violence, yet research in this area has shown that criminal incidents, including bullying, are prevalent in our nation's public elementary and secondary schools.

The most recent data from the U.S. Department of Education's Digest of Education Statistics found criminal incidents in about 86 percent of public elementary and secondary schools. Additionally, bullying and being bullied are associated with key violence-related behaviors, including carrying weapons, fighting, and sustaining injuries from fighting. We hear more each day about bullying occurring in schools and online. In fact, in 2007, 32 percent of 12-18 year old students reported being bullied at school and 4 percent of students reporting being cyber-bullied.

The issues of school crime and safety impact every state and Congressional district, no matter the size of the state or school location. Although my home state of Delaware enacted a bully prevention law last year, has a school crime reporting law in place, and an unsafe choice option policy was created after the passage of No

Child Left Behind, 22 violent felonies and 572 cases of bullying statewide were reported to the Delaware Department of Education.

At the federal level, Congress has taken important steps towards reducing school crimes and violence to improve school safety with the enactment of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and the reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) in 2002.

The No Child Left Behind Act contains a number of provisions designed to provide states and school districts with resources to address school safety at elementary and secondary schools. This includes the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act to provide federal funds to states and school districts to support drug and violence prevention efforts; provisions related to persistently dangerous schools, in which students may transfer to safer schools if they attend a school identified as being persistently dangerous; and the Partnerships in Character Education program, which provides funds to states and school districts to design and implement effective character education programs.

Additionally, the reauthorized Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act makes an effort to reduce juvenile crime through the funding of prevention programs and activities which hold juveniles accountable for their actions, and by providing technical assistance, research, and dissemination of information on effective programs for combating juvenile crime. Additionally, the JJDPA provides assistance to state and local governments to address the problems of runaway and homeless youth.

The actions taken by states and the reauthorization of these bills have been major stepping stones in improving school and youth safety. The crime statistics, however, continue to alarm me, and I am hopeful that through this hearing, we can learn ways in which those at the federal, state, and local levels can continue to promote and improve school safety and prevent bullying and other school crimes in our nation's schools.

Thank you again. I yield back.

Chairwoman McCARTHY. Pursuant to committee rule 12A, any member may submit an opening statement in writing at this point, which will be made part of the permanent record. Without objection, all members will have 14 days to submit additional materials or questions for the hearing record.

Let me explain the lighting system that we have before I make the introduction of—in front of you you will see a black box. When you start speaking, it will be 5 minutes. When it gets down to the yellow, that means you have about a minute left to finish your thoughts. And then obviously, red means try to finish up your sentence and so we can go forward.

I would like to briefly introduce our very distinguished panel of witnesses here with us this afternoon. The complete bios of the witnesses will be inserted for the record.

Our first witness will be Mr. Ken Trump. He is the president of National School Safety and Security Services, of Cleveland, Ohio, based national firm specializing in K-12 schools security and emergency preparedness training and consulting.

He began his school safety career as an officer investigator and youth gang unit supervisor for the Cleveland city schools safety division, after which he served as suburban Cleveland schools security director and assistant gang assistance force director. And he has testified before this committee before, and we appreciate that.

Mr. Andrews—and I ask unanimous consent for a member of the full committee, Mr. Andrews, to introduce the first two witnesses, Josie and Jackie Andrews, Mr. Andrews?

Mr. ANDREWS OF NEW JERSEY. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. I want to thank you and Chairman Kildee and Mr. Platts and Mr. Castle for extending me the courtesy of attending this morning.

I have known these two witnesses their entire life, so I feel uniquely qualified to introduce them. Jackie Andrews is 16 years old. She is a high honors student at the Lawrenceville School in Lawrenceville, New Jersey. She is a nationally ranked crew athlete.

And most importantly for this morning's purposes, she has engaged in the last 3 years in the development of a curriculum and program to teach people how to avoid bullying and how to do something better. We are immensely proud of her achievement in that area. She has also worked with her sister in helping to write music for a project that her sister is going to talk about.

Josie Andrews is 14 years old. She is the creator and songwriter and scriptwriter for a project called "Milo J High: An Anti-Bullying Musical," a story about a bullying problem in a junior high school. She is a student at Stanford University's education program for gifted youth, an online education experience, and she is going to talk about her ideas and achievements as well.

We are also honored this morning to be joined by some friends who have assisted in this effort, who are constituents and friends from New Jersey, Nicole Rodis and Danielle Jones—Danielle Janco—excuse me—and Megan Jones.

And finally, Madam Chair, with your indulgence, the person who has really taught these witnesses about how to conduct themselves as young women is their mother, my wife, Camille Andrews, who is here.

My daughters have never doubted for a millisecond that anything is possible in their lives and careers, because they have a mother who has shown them that. And I am very grateful for her excellent raising of these children, usually in the absence of their congressman father, who is off doing other things.

I also am delighted by the fact, Madam Chair, but I understand the rules of the committee permit us to put the witnesses under oath and require them to answer questions, so every——

[Laughter.]

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Don't push it. [Laughter.]

Mr. ANDREWS OF NEW JERSEY. Okay. Every parent of a teenager welcomes this opportunity, but I thank you very much for your courtesies this morning.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. And I thank you, Mr. Andrews.

Now I would like to yield to Ranking Member Mr. Platts, who will introduce our next witness, Ms. Kaufmann.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I am honored to introduce Rona Kaufmann, who is principal at William Penn Senior High School in York, Pennsylvania, my hometown, and especially as principal of William Penn, the alma mater of both my mom and dad, class of 1947 and 1951, proud Bill Penn graduates, they would say.

Rona has almost 30 years in the education field, including about 20 years in the classroom. Prior to being principal at William Penn, was principal at our largest middle school in York, Hannah Penn, and has been instrumental in the character and education program in our schools.

And we very much look forward to your testimony, and again, appreciate you being here and the work you are doing every day with the children of York. So thanks for being part of this hearing.

You back, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you.

Our next witness is Mr. Steve Riach, who is the founder and board chairman, Heart of Champion Foundation. The Heart of Champion Foundation provides character education curriculum to nearly 100 schools.

The program teaches students about character, using lessons that consistently reinforce positive character traits by giving examples of persons with high character. These stories are told through print and video stories and mainly focus on athletes that embody individual traits.

Thank you for being here and welcome.

Our next witness is Ms. Walker from Springfield, Massachusetts.

Welcome.

She will discuss her own personal tragic story about what the consequences of bullying can be on children.

Our next witness is Cassady Tetsworth, a soon to be senior from Northwest High School in Greensboro, North Carolina. Cassady has been active in school safety efforts for the last 6 years to her involvement with the Student Groups against Violence Everywhere, or SAVE.

Currently, Cassady is the vice chair of SAVE's national youth advocacy board. In 2005 she received the President's Volunteer Service Award and the Win-Win Resolution Young Peacemaker Award.

She is a peer tutor and active in volunteer and service activities. She is also active in her church youth group and is working towards her gold medal in Girl Scouts.

Finally, we will hear from Dr. Scott Poland.

Welcome again.

Dr. Poland is a faculty member and coordinator of the Suicide and Violence Prevention Office at Nova Northeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Dr. Poland is a nationally recognized expert on school crisis, school violence, suicide intervention, self-injury, school safety, threat assignment, parenting and the delivery of psychological services to our schools.

He has lectured and written extensively on the subject and presided over 1,000 workshops in every state, numerous foreign countries, and serves on the president's roundtable on youth violence.

Dr. Poland is the past president of the National Association of School Psychologists and was the director of psychological services, 1982 to 2005, for a large Texas school district that received numerous state and national awards for its exemplary psychological services.

He will touch on characteristics of effective prevention and intervention programs, mental health issues related to school safety, and how they fit in the big picture of our school safety in our schools.

For those again that have not testified before Congress, I have already gone through the lighting. Everyone knows that they will get 5 minutes. The green light means for you to go. Yellow means to start to finish up. The red means to please stop. Be certain as

you testify to turn on and speak into the microphone that is in front of you.

We will now hear from our first witness.

Mr. Trump?

STATEMENT OF KENNETH S. TRUMP, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY SERVICES

Mr. TRUMP. Chairwoman McCarthy, Chairman Kildee, Ranking Members Platts and Castle, and distinguished subcommittee members, thank you for dedicating your time and leadership to the number one concern of parents and education nationwide. As a father myself, part of that is the safety and security of our children.

April 20th, 2009, marked the 10th anniversary of the 1999 Columbine High School attack, and our experience and analysis shows a mixed bag of lessons learned and implemented well, with still some glaring gaps and a lot of work remaining on school safety.

Two areas I wish to address in today's hearing: number one, opportunities for improving federal school safety policy by strengthening school safety data, and I have got some comments on the importance of framing a comprehensive approach to school safety policies and programming.

On the data, there are serious gaps in federal data on school crime and violence. Federal data is limited to a mixed collection of a half a dozen or so academic surveys reflected by Congresswoman McCarthy, and that data, as she indicated, lacks incident-based data to supplement the survey-based data.

The Indicators report can include data 2 to 6 years behind the actual time that the report is submitted to Congress and the public, and the report in itself, while a valiant effort to put the picture together, is peppered with disclaimers and limitations of the survey data, including limitations on self-report surveys, difficulties and comparing data across the different sources, and the inability to really discuss trends because of the different sources of the data.

That limited data can have an impact on federal school safety policy and programming and funding issues, oftentimes directing attention, perhaps, where an emphasis may not be needed and taking away from areas that may require more attention.

There are also data flaws in the Gun-Free Schools Act. Some of the loopholes include requiring local—the act requires local education agencies to report to state education agencies the number of students expelled for firearms and guns on campuses, the key words being "students" and "expelled."

Non-students who are arrested on campus with firearms are not necessarily included in those reports to the state. Students who were expelled for other offenses, but come on campus with guns, may not be reported.

And special education students, who may be placed in modified educational services instead of technically being expelled, incidents involving those students may not be included as well, which means even our Gun-Free Schools Act data that you receive could understate the extent of those incidents on campus.

The bottom line is the federal data grossly underestimates the extent of school violence. Public perception often overstates it. Re-

ality exists somewhere in between, but statistically in real numbers we don't know where that someplace actually is.

Developing accurate data has been important in academic achievement. We need to apply that same emphasis to school safety data. And last session, H.R. 354, introduced by Congresswoman McCarthy, the SAVE Act, called for meaningful and practical steps to improve accountability, accuracy and transparency in reporting school crime and called for improvements in tightening those loopholes in the Gun-Free Schools Act, which we support and encourage everyone to revisit this session.

The SAVE Act also included including available NIBRS data the congresswoman requested earlier, and it would be the first time that incident-based data is brought into the conversation in that side in our federal discussion of school safety policy and is a very important thing to accompany the surveys that we have.

It reflects no invasion of privacy. It is incident-based data, not individual data. And it creates no bureaucracies, a major cost, but would be very helpful in our analysis of school safety.

Today's picture on school safety must include a comprehensive approach. Today's school administrators must be prepared to deal with threats, including bullying, verbal and physical aggression and fighting on one end of the continuum, all the way to weather and natural disasters, nonstudent intruders on campus, irate parent violence, spillover of community incidents, gang activity, school stabbings, shootings, and even terrorism, on threat potentially to schools.

Just as these threats are a wide range and on a continuing, so must be our policies, programming and resources to deal with these threats. The key words are "comprehensive" and "balanced." And while some school safety advocates will call for more prevention or better security, we advocate for more prevention and better security. We have to have a secure environment to deliver the educational prevention and intervention services.

What consists of a comprehensive and balanced program is detailed in my written testimony. I would also encourage Congress and the administration to look to see and some other ways that they could help provide guidance with the recent stimulus funding to school administrators, to how that may be used to support school safety and security efforts.

I again encourage, as you look at reauthorizing No Child Left Behind, at how you could incorporate strong and supportive school safety, security and emergency preparedness components into the reauthorization, ensure that federal school safety policies and programming of funding again are comprehensive and balanced.

And when programs are deemed ineffective, look at how those ineffective programs could be replaced with new programs that could continue in sustaining safe schools efforts.

Thank you, and I look forward to answering any questions.

[The statement of Mr. Trump follows:]

Prepared Statement of Kenneth S. Trump, M.P.A., President and CEO, National School Safety and Security Services, Inc.

Chairwoman McCarthy, Chairman Kildee, Ranking Members Platts and Castle, and distinguished subcommittee members, thank you for dedicating your time and

this hearing to the number one school concern of parents nationwide: The safety and security of their children.

My name is Kenneth Trump and I am the President and CEO of National School Safety and Security Services, Incorporated, a Cleveland (Ohio)-based national consulting firm specializing in school safety, security, and school emergency preparedness consulting and training. I have worked with K-12 school officials and their public safety partners in urban, suburban, and rural communities from all 50 states during my full-time 25 years in the school safety profession.

In addition to my consulting experience, my background includes having served over seven years with the Cleveland City School District's Safety and Security Division as a high school and junior high school safety officer, a district-wide field investigator, and as founding supervisor of its nationally-recognized Youth Gang Unit that contributed to a 39% reduction in school gang crimes and violence. I later served three years as director of security for the ninth-largest Ohio school district with 13,000 students, where I also served as assistant director of a federal-funded model anti-gang project for three southwest Cleveland suburbs. My full biographical information is on our web site at *www.schoolsecurity.org/school-safety-experts/trump.html.*

I have authored two books and over 50 professional articles on school security and emergency preparedness issues. My education background includes having earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Services (Criminal Justice concentration) and a Master of Public Administration degree from Cleveland State University; special certification for completing the Advanced Physical Security Training Program at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center; and extensive specialized training on school safety and emergency planning, terrorism and homeland security, gang prevention and intervention, and related youth safety topics.

I am honored to have this fourth opportunity to present Congressional testimony. In 1999, I testified to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee as a school safety and crisis expert. In 2007, I testified to the House Committee on Education and Labor. I also testified on school emergency preparedness issues in 2007 to the House Committee on Homeland Security.

My national work has included providing expert testimony to the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) Task Force on School and Campus Safety in 2007. In April of 2008, I was invited by the U.S. State Department to provide a briefing to teachers, school officials, and community partners in Israel on school safety, school violence prevention, school security, and school emergency preparedness as coordinated by the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv. I was an invited attendee at the White House Conference on School Safety in October of 2006. I also served in 2006-2007 as the volunteer Chair of the Prevention Committee and as an Executive Committee member for Cleveland's Comprehensive Anti-Gang Initiative, one of six Department of Justice-funded federal and local collaborative model projects to address gangs through enforcement, prevention, and reentry strategies.

School districts and other organizations engage our services to evaluate school emergency preparedness plans, provide professional development training on proactive school security and crisis prevention strategies, develop and facilitate school tabletop exercises, conduct school security assessment evaluations, and consult with school administrators and board members on management plans for school violence prevention and improving school safety. While our work is largely proactive and preventative, we have increasingly found ourselves also called to assist educators and their school communities with security and preparedness issues following high-profile incidents of school violence. In the past several years alone, we have worked in a school district where a student brought an AK-47 to school, fired shots in the halls, and then committed suicide; in a private school where death threats raised student and parental anxiety; in a school district where a student brought a tree saw and machete to school, attacked students in his first period class, and sent multiple children to the hospital with serious injuries; and most recently in a school district experiencing student and parental school safety concerns after a student was murdered in a gang-related community incident.

My testimony provides unique perspectives on school safety. I am not an academician, researcher, psychologist, social worker, law enforcement official, or government agency representative. Instead, I bring a perspective of 25 years of full-time, frontline experience in directly working with public and private schools, their public safety and community partners, students, and parents on K-12 school safety, security, and emergency preparedness issues.

Most importantly, I am a father. Like most parents, I want my children to achieve academically at school. But even more importantly, I want them to be safe from harm and well protected in the hands of school leaders who have the resources and skills for creating and sustaining schools that are emotionally and physically safe,

secure, and well prepared for preventing and managing emergencies. As members of Congress, I encourage you and your colleagues to make all of your school safety policy and funding decisions not only with the wisdom of skilled legislators, but also with the heart and concern of a caring and concerned parent.

The state of school safety 10 years post-Columbine

This past April 20, 2009, marked the 10th anniversary of the 1999 attack at Columbine High School in Colorado. Our experience and analysis shows a mixed bag of lessons learned and implemented, with many glaring gaps and a lot of work remaining on school safety issues.

The good news is that progress made on school safety in the past decade has included improved school climates, better threat assessment protocols, enhanced physical security measures, and a heightened awareness of the importance of school safety. Schools have also created crisis plans and teams, added new drills, and enhanced relationships with first responders. In general, there is a greater awareness and recognition of school safety threats today than there was pre-Columbine, and school administrators deal more with safety issues now than in decades past.

The bad news is that while many schools have invested in security technology, they have been investing less time and effort in their people. Time and training for school safety and emergency planning is harder to come by than money in many districts. Limited investment on the people end of school safety has created a significant need to go back to the basic, fundamentals of violence prevention, security, and emergency planning. The first and best line of defense is always a well trained, highly alert school staff and student body.

Every adult has a responsibility for school safety. Too often many key adults, such as school custodians, food service workers, and secretaries, are missing from school safety training and crisis teams. Students and parents are key, but often missing, partners in school safety programs.

School safety officials continue to fight against complacency. Time and distance from high profile incidents breed complacency and denial. Too many people still believe, 'It can't happen here because it has not happened here'."

Improve Federal school safety policy by strengthening school safety data

Overview

There are serious gaps in federal data on school crime and violence. Federal data is primarily limited to a mixed collection of a half-dozen or so academic surveys and research studies. The data used by Congress, the Administration, and others to make policy and funding decisions lacks adequate incident-based data on actual crime and violence incidents in schools, and thereby increases the risks of flawed federal school safety policy and funding decisions.

The over-reliance on surveys with little-to-no data on actual school-based crimes results in a very limited, skewed, and understated picture of crime and violence in our nation's schools. Federal school safety data grossly underestimates the extent of school crime and violence, while public and media perception tends to overstate the problem. Reality exists somewhere in between these two parameters, but no one, especially at the federal level, can identify where in real numbers.

Congress can improve federal school safety data by incorporating incident-based data into federal school safety data collection. The Department of Education should continue to collect the currently reported perception and self-report academic surveys. The addition of incident-based data would provide a more accurate and comprehensive data picture upon which our elected officials can rely for making improved federal school safety policy and funding decisions.

Recent Incidents Illustrate the Need for a Renewed Focus on K-12 School Safety

Recent incidents of violence at school, as well as to and from school, have plagued a number of larger, urban school districts and their school-communities. School districts in Chicago, Detroit, Memphis, Milwaukee, and Philadelphia have repeatedly been in the news over the past three years for high-profile gang violence, school fights, violence against students and staff, weapons incidents, student shootings, and/or student deaths to and from school. These incidents continue, despite outrage and outreach by school and city officials.

In my monitoring of news stories on school safety incidents around the nation, in talking with school board members and administrators from across the nation at our workshops, and in email inquiries we receive, we are seeing a particular uptick in gang-related issues affecting schools and school communities in many parts of the country. This particularly appears to be the case in large urban school districts and in urban/suburban school communities.

School violence is, however, by no means limited to large school districts and urban areas. Recent higher-profile incidents illustrate that school-associated violence and safety concerns strike all communities: Urban, suburban, and rural. For example, just in the past three months:

• Detroit, Michigan: June 30, 2009—Seven teens, the majority summer school students, were struck by gunfire after school at a bus-stop near a Detroit high school. Two weeks prior a 16-year-old female student was reportedly shot in the chest after leaving another city school in an unrelated incident;

• Parkersburg, Iowa: June 24, 2009—A nationally-recognized, award-winning high school football coach was shot and killed, allegedly by a 24-year-old former student, while supervising a weightlifting activity at the school;

• Blauvelt, New York: June 9, 2009—The school district's superintendent tackled and disarmed an irate 37-year-old father with a gun who barged into the district's middle school, angry over information the district put out about swine flu;

• Cleveland Heights, Ohio: June 1, 2009—11 students were arrested for aggravated rioting after a larger altercation that began during lunch hour and spilled out in the street;

• Thibodaux, Louisiana: May 18, 2009—An armed 15-year-old male middle school student stormed into a classroom, fired a shot over a teacher's head, and then shot himself in the head in a school bathroom. He later died. Police report he had plans to kill four students and then himself;

• Sheboygan, Wisconsin: May 1, 2009—A 17-year-old male high school senior received a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the abdomen while in the school's parking lot about 40 minutes after school dismissal. Over 100 students still inside the school went into lockdown;

• Waterloo, Iowa: April 29, 2009—One day after the stabbing death of a high school student in a fight involving large groups at a community park, 400 to 500 parents went to a district high school to remove their children from school following rumors and fears of gang retaliation violence;

• Silver Spring, Maryland: April 28, 2009—Police arrested two high school juniors for allegedly setting three fires at their Montgomery County High School. Police also charged the males for conspiracy to commit murder after they discovered an alleged plot to kill their principal with a nail-filled bomb and set off a major explosion inside the school; and

• Rockford, Illinois: April 20, 2009—A 14-year-old male high school student was shot in the leg across the street from the school while walking to school. Police subsequently arrested an 18-year-old suspect. Three area schools went into lockdown as a result of the shooting and parents.

These are only a sample of incidents. The list goes on and on. See our web page on School-associated Violent Deaths at *www.schoolsecurity.org/trends/school—violence.html* and our most recent sample listing of school year incidents (2008-2009 school year) at *www.schoolsecurity.org/trends/school—violence08-09.html.*

Federal School Crime and Violence Data is Limited Primarily to Surveys, Not Incident-based Data; Major Flaws Exist with Federal School Safety Data

The sad reality is that most of the aforementioned incidents would never be reflected in federal data collected on school safety as the bulk of federal school safety data comes from academic type survey-based data and not incident-based data. Yet Congress and the Administration rely heavily upon the survey-based data presented by the U.S. Department of Education and other agencies to make critical school safety policy and funding decisions.

The truth is that there is no comprehensive, mandatory federal school crime reporting and tracking of actual school crime incidents for K-12 schools. Federal school crime and violence data consists primarily of a hodgepodge collection of over a half-dozen academic surveys and research studies. This data is often mistakenly perceived by policymakers, the media, and others as a reflection of the number of actual crime and violence incidents, and as credible trend indicators of school crime and violence occurring in our schools.

The primary source of federal school crime and violence data is the annual, "Indicators of School Crime and Safety," report. The latest published report entitled, "Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2008," carries a cover date of April 2009 and was released on the web about two and one-half months ago on April 21, 2009.

The Executive Summary of this April 2009 report describes, in part, the sources and dates of the data as follows: "This report is the eleventh in a series of annual publications produced jointly by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Institute of Education Sciences (IES), in the U.S. Department of Education, and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) in the U.S. Department of Justice. This report presents the most recent data available on school crime and student safety.

The indicators in this report are based on information drawn from a variety of data sources, including national surveys of students, teachers, and principals. Sources include results from a study of violent deaths in schools, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; the National Crime Victimization Survey and School Crime Supplement to the survey, sponsored by the BJS and NCES, respectively; the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and the Schools and Staffing Survey and School Survey on Crime and Safety, both sponsored by NCES. The most recent data collection for each indicator varied by survey, from 2003-04 to 2007. Each data source has an independent sample design, data collection method, and questionnaire design or is the result of a universe data collection. All comparisons described in this report are statistically significant at the .05 level. In 2005 and 2007, the final response rate for students ages 12-18 for the School Crime Supplement (60 percent),1 fell below NCES statistical standards; therefore, interpret the 2005 and 2007 data from Indicators 3, 8, 10, 11, 17, 18, and 21, with caution. Additional information about methodology and the datasets analyzed in this report may be found in appendix A." For this summary and links to the report, see *http://nces.ed.gov/programs/crimeindicators/crimeindicators2008/index.asp*

Page 4 of this report identifies eight surveys used in this report: National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS); The School-Associated Violent Deaths Surveillance Study; School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey; School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS); Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS); Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR); Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System Fatal; and Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS).

The authors state that, "This report presents the most recent data available on school crime and student safety." The report also indicates that, "The most recent data collection for each indicator varied by survey, from 2003-04 to 2007." While several surveys identify 2007 as their latest survey year, a number of last survey dates range in the 2003-2004 to 2005-2006 school year time period. This means data provided in the "2008" Indicators report (published in April of 2009) can be anywhere from two to six years behind the actual time the report is provided to legislators and the public. Even Table 1.2 on school-associated violent deaths (page 75) footnotes that the 2006-07 school death, "Data are preliminary and subject to change."

The authors of the report are commended for their valiant effort to provide legislators, educators, and others a single point document on school crime and violence statistics. Readers who pay attention to the footnotes and disclaimers, however, will unfortunately find it difficult to easily make sense of the numbers, make meaningful comparisons, or identify long-term trends. Still, there is some value in continuing these surveys, and I support continuation of the surveys with the suggestion that the authors attempt to create some long-term stability in definitions, data comparisons, and trend analysis.

[As a side note, it is more important for local education agencies to conduct annual, ongoing surveys of students, staff, parents, safety officials, and others in their local school communities. These surveys should be developed to gauge key issues related to school safety threats and strategies, to identify local trends, and to develop prevention strategies. Federal funding for use in creating local and regional surveys on school safety and associated issues is encouraged.]

With respect to the federal Indicators report, the most important points in this annual document rest in the footnotes, appendices, and narratives describing the limitations of the data. The report is peppered with disclaimers and limitations of the data therein, including warnings such as:

"The report is not intended to be an exhaustive compilation of school crime and safety information * * *;"

"The dashed horizontal line indicates a break in trend due to a redesign of the methods used to measure victimization in the 2006 National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). Due to this redesign, please use caution when comparing 2006 estimates with estimates of earlier years;"

"Several indicators in this report are based on self-reported survey data. Readers should note that limitations inherent to self-reported data may affect estimates * * * These and other factors may affect the precision of the estimates based on these surveys."

"Data trends are discussed in this report when possible. Where trends are not discussed, either the data are not available in earlier surveys or the wording of the survey question changed from year to year, eliminating the ability to discuss any trend;" and

"The combination of multiple, independent sources of data provides a broad perspective on school crime and safety that could not be achieved through any single

source of information. However, readers should be cautious when comparing data from different sources. While every effort has been made to keep key definitions consistent across indicators, differences in samples procedures, populations, time periods, and question phrasing can all affect the comparability of results * * * In addition, different indicators contain various approaches to the analysis of school crime data and, therefore, will show different perspectives on school crime."

These are only a sample of disclaimers. Appendix A to the document contains the data and report disclaimers. See more online at *http://nces.ed.gov/programs/crimeindicators/crimeindicators2008/pdf/2009022—app—a.pdf*

Unfortunately, policymakers, educators, the media, and others looking at school crime and violence data and trends often fail to read the "small print" in the footnotes and appendices. Instead, due to the busy nature of their work, they typically take at face value quick facts or trends gleaned in a snippet from the report. The end product is policy and funding decisions made based upon extremely limited data and claimed trends, often with policy emphasis on issues that may not warrant such attention, and funding cuts to school safety programs where sustained or expanded funding may actually be what is needed on the front lines in our schools.

Many in Congress are also likely unaware that data from the Gun Free Schools Act (GFSA) passed by Congress many years ago is limited due to loopholes in reporting. The GFSA requires local education agencies to report to their state education agencies the number of students expelled for gun offenses on campuses. The key words are "students" and "expelled."

Schools do not have to report non-students (adults, trespassers, parents, etc.) arrested on campuses with firearms because they are not students. Reporting would also not be required for students who are already expelled due to other offenses but return to campus with a firearm. There are also questions as to whether special education students apprehended with firearms are all being reported under GFSA since their disabilities may technically not result in an "expulsion" from school, but instead may result in modified educational placements and services at home or elsewhere which do not technically constitute an "expulsion" per se.

This means that even the federal data from GFSA reports understate the actual number of cases of firearms cases occurring on our nation's K-12 school campuses.

School crimes are also underreported to police, states, and local school communities. It is commonly accepted by most school safety professionals that school officials have historically underreported to local police crimes which occur on campus. While this sometimes has occurred because school officials honestly fail to distinguish crimes from violations of school rules, it also has occurred far too often because school officials are concerned about protecting the image of their schools and believe they will draw adverse media and public attention to their school by reporting incidents to the police.

I conducted four annual surveys of over 700 school-based police officers per year, for each year from 2001 through 2004. In these four surveys, I found 84% to 89% of school-based officers indicating it is their professional belief that crimes occurring in schools have gone unreported to law enforcement. See *www.schoolsecurity.org/resources/nasro—survey—2004.html*

We also know that school discipline and crime data is often inaccurately reported to state education agencies which require local districts to file such reports annually. While many local districts are quick to claim innocent misunderstandings of report definitions and problems with the reporting mechanisms, it is fair to believe that some intentional underreporting is occurring as well. For a number of investigative news stories and more background on school crime underreporting, see our web page at *www.schoolsecurity.org/trends/school—crime—reporting.html*

I have no desire to be alarmist or to overstate the extent of school crime and violence in our nation's schools. However, it is clear school crime is underreported in general, and federal statistics grossly understate the extent of crime and violence on our nation's campuses. Policymakers relying upon such data are at high risk of making faulty school safety policy and funding decisions.

Congress Can Strengthen School Safety by Improving Federal School Safety Data

Improved federal school safety data would improve federal school safety policy and funding decisions. We cannot accurately identify school crime trends, and in turn develop meaningful prevention and intervention programs, without more accurate data.

Developing accurate data has been a fundamental focus of establishing academic performance standards in No Child Left Behind and other educational discussions, and the same importance should also apply to school safety data.

If we do not have accurate and timely federal data on high-profile violent crimes in schools such as school-associated violent deaths, robberies, sexual assaults, weapons incidents (firearms, bladed weapons, etc.), how will we ever expect to begin collecting more accurate data to address lower-level aggression and violence in schools such as bullying, verbal threats, fighting, etc.?

Last session, H.R. 354, the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (The "SAVE" Act), was introduced by The Honorable Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy. I strongly encourage the Committee members and your colleagues to approve this type of act in the future. The SAVE Act called for meaningful and practical steps to improve accountability, accuracy, and transparency to our nation's parents and educators in the reporting of school crimes and violence. It also called for much better guidance on reporting school crimes, tightening of loopholes in the Gun Free Schools Act reporting, and the use of incident-based data (instead of just perception and opinion-based data from surveys) in determining safe climates for academic achievement.

The SAVE Act would close the loopholes in the Gun Free Schools Act by including reporting requirements for students who are already expelled, removed or suspended from school, as well as non-students who may bring a firearm on campus or on a school bus. Current law only requires reporting on students who have been expelled. The Act also required certification that data is accurate and reliable, an important component for improving accountability of those who report school crime data who may otherwise be tempted to underreport.

The SAVE Act required states to use already available data from the FBI's National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) in determining what is now known as "persistently dangerous schools", a label that The SAVE Act would modify to "safe climate for academic achievement" options to remove the stigma of "persistently dangerous" which encourages underreporting by local schools. The introduction of NIBRS data into school safety policy and funding decisions would provide the first meaningful effort to shift the conversation on school safety from one based upon perception and opinion surveys, to incident-based data on real crimes that actually occur at our nation's schools. Congress, state legislators, and local educators could have a data source on school crime based upon real incidents occurring in our schools, rather than solely relying on the perceptions and opinions of a limited population tapped for academic surveys.

The SAVE Act required no new bureaucracies or overwhelming budgetary expenditures to collect school incident data. It simply called for breaking out existing data in a manner to identify crimes occurring at K-12 schools. It reflects no invasion of privacy, and focused on incident-based data, not individual-based data (a record of the number of incidents that occur).

Comprehensive school safety policies, programs, and funding

Framing a Comprehensive Approach to School Safety

There is no single cause of school violence, nor is there any single solution. Too often, genuinely concerned individuals ranging from parents to legislators blame one particular factor for causing school violence (gangs, bullying, deficient home lives, etc.) and one particular solution (more metal detectors and security equipment, more anti-bullying programs, more prevention, etc.). High-profile incidents in the media often lead to "legislation by anecdote" and, corresponding policy and appropriation decisions of a single-issue and single-program focus.

Today's school administrators must be prepared to deal with a broad continuum of school safety threats. These threats to safe schools include bullying, verbal and physical aggression, and fighting on one end of the continuum, to weather and natural disasters, non-student intruders on campus, irate parent violence, spillover of community-originating violence, to-and-from school attacks on students, gang violence, stabbing incidents, school shootings, and terrorist threats to schools on the other extreme. Just as these threats span a wide, broad continuum, so must the scope and depth of school safety prevention, intervention, security, and emergency preparedness strategies to prevent and manage these threats.

Federal school safety policy, programs, and funding, just like that at the state and local education level, must therefore be based upon an approach and framework which is comprehensive and balanced. Too often, school safety advocates call for "more prevention" OR "better security." The real answer should be "more prevention" AND "better security." Effective approaches to school safety include prevention, security, and preparedness measures, not a curriculum-only or security-only approach. An overemphasis and narrow focus on bullying or gangs alone is no more effective than an overemphasis on security equipment or more police in schools alone.

Approaches to school safety must also be comprehensive in looking at where threats to student and staff safety may arise. Crime and violence impact students and the entire school-community not only within the school campus boundaries, but also to-and-from school, on school buses, and at school-sponsored events. Too often we have seen education officials quick to point out which side of the school property line a student shooting occurred (across the street or a block away instead of inside the campus property line), yet shootings at the bus stop, incidents to-and-from school, athletic event violence, etc. has a profound disruptive impact on school operations due to student, parent, and staff anxiety and fear from the incident.

While our discussions herein focus on K-12 settings, we must also recognize that a growing number of pre-school, Head Start, and other early childhood programs face safety threats. Non-custodial parent issues, stranger danger, and other threats to our youngest of children warrant consideration in school safety prevention, security, and preparedness planning. Many early childhood programs operate within elementary and secondary school buildings where regular classes are occurring, in separate K-12 school district stand alone buildings, and in community-based sites such as former businesses and store-fronts with challenging physical facilities, poor physical security measures, and no emergency preparedness training or plans.

We cannot have rollercoaster school safety policy and funding at any level of government. Throwing money at school safety after a high-profile incident is no wiser than is cutting school safety funding when there is not a tragedy in the headlines. School safety policy, programming, and funding must be ongoing, sustained, and reasonably funded for the long haul.

Bullying, Discipline, and School Climate

Bullying is a serious issue worthy of reasonable attention, awareness, and action. Bullying is one of many factors which must be taken into consideration in developing safe schools prevention, intervention, and enforcement plans. Bully-prevention efforts and initiatives are one of many strategies that should be included in a comprehensive school safety program.

Anti-bullying strategies should include prevention and intervention programs, and also adult supervision and security measures. Dr. Ronald Pitner, Ph.D., assistant professor of social work at Washington University in St. Louis, concluded in a bullying study that schools must focus on the physical context of the school. Dr. Pitner noted that bullying and school violence in general typically occur in predictable locations within schools, specifically unmonitored areas such as hallways, restrooms, stairwells, and playgrounds. He found schools can cut down on violence if they identify specific "hotspots" within schools where students feel violence is likely to occur.

"Although this approach will not completely eliminate bullying, research has shown that it would at least cut down on the areas where violence is likely to occur," he was attributed as saying. His recommendation: "This focus underscores the importance of viewing school bullying as both an individual- and organizational-level phenomenon."

There is also a relationship between anti-bullying efforts and school discipline. In a study conducted by psychiatrists at The Menninger Clinic in Houston, nearly half of elementary school teachers admitted to bullying students. Most attributed it to a lack of classroom discipline, according to one news report on the study. While I absolutely do not believe that our teachers are intentionally harming or intimidating students, the reference to classroom discipline warrants recognition as one important contributor in providing emotionally and physically safe schools.

In the past decade, we have heard of "zero tolerance" policies which result in the administration of questionable disciplinary action against students in our schools. No one can dispute that there have been a number of anecdotal cases of questionable discipline where students have been given extreme disciplinary consequences (suspensions, expulsions, criminal prosecution referrals, etc.) for what appear to be relatively minor offenses. The vast majority of school principals, assistant principals, deans, and related administrators I have met in my career strive for firm, fair, and consistent discipline applied with good common sense.

It is impossible to legislate common sense. We must also be careful not to foster environments where educators fear administering reasonable discipline out of pressure to keep their disciplinary statistics low and their image on the high. Therefore, we must insure that schools have well designed and clearly published due process mechanisms for students and parents to engage to challenge questionable disciplinary action. Effective school due process/appeals measures, along with our courts of law, will be the most logical forum for questionable discipline to be challenged.

Legislative bodies can, however, help improve school discipline and prevent extreme disciplinary actions by supporting professional development training for school administrators on school discipline, student behavior management, violence

prevention, proactive school security, and crisis preparedness issues. There is substantial turnover in school principals, assistant principals, and deans today due to a wave of career school administrators who are retiring out. New school administrators cannot simply be handed the building keys, a two-way radio, and a student handbook, and told, "Go for it." They need professional development training, coaching, and support to be the most effective and fair administrators possible.

"Bullying" often refers to verbal, physical, or other acts committed by a student to harass, intimidate, or cause harm to another student. The behaviors attributed to bullying include verbal threats, menacing, harassment, intimidation, assaults, extortion, disruption of the school environment, and associated disorderly conduct. In defining bullying, the focus should be on specific inappropriate behaviors rather than a generic, undefined label of bullying.

The vast majority, if not all, schools in the nation have disciplinary policies to address behaviors such as making verbal threats, harassment, assaults, intimidation, extortion, disruptive behavior, etc. School policies, parent/student handbooks, and related student conduct codes typically outline such inappropriate behaviors and corresponding disciplinary consequences.

Schools nationwide have also implemented school climate, prevention and intervention programs, and other school improvement strategies to prevent and manage bullying behaviors and improve overall school climate, especially post-Columbine. In many school districts, superintendents and principals are required to submit school climate, school safety, and school improvement plans each year which are included in their annual performance reviews. Anti-bullying and school climate strategies are emphasized in the vast majority of schools we work in each school year.

The aforementioned studies, along with my 25 years of experience in school safety, reinforce that having firm, fair, and consistent discipline enforcement in our schools reduces the likelihood of crime and violence, including bullying. School climate and improvement plans should also include anti-bullying strategies. Discipline and school climate strategies, combined with balanced and reasonable security measures targeting "hot spots" where bullying occurs, can create a safer and more secure climate. This can in turn reduce the likelihood of bullying, disciplinary violations, violence, and school crime.

We must also invest in providing better physical and mental health support to our students. Two recently released books, one by Dr. Peter Langman, a Pennsylvania child psychologist, and another widely cited book by journalist Dave Cullen, emphasize that mental health disorders were largely attributable to the Columbine shooters and other school violence perpetrators. One lesson learned from many of the school shootings and other acts of school violence is that the perpetrators often have undiagnosed and/or untreated mental health issues.

Children also cannot be expected to focus on academics if they have unaddressed physical health issues. Thus, the importance of our school counselors, psychologists, and nurses must be reflected in school support service staffing. Their services are directly related to providing safe schools. Too often these professional support personnel are grossly understaffed and spread so thinly across school districts that it is nearly impossible to provide the scope and depth of services needed to reasonably serve students.

Elements of a Comprehensive School Safety Program

Elements of a comprehensive and balanced school safety program include:

- School climate strategies stressing order and structure, respect, trust, diversity, school ownership, peaceful resolution of conflicts, and related characteristics
- Incident-based data collection and analysis of discipline, crime, and violence incidents, supplemented by student, staff, and school-community survey-based data
- Firm, fair, and consistent discipline
- Adult supervision, adult visibility, and positive adult relationships with students
- Effective prevention and intervention programs
- Mental and physical health support services
- Strong academic programs with diverse extracurricular activities
- Student-led school safety involvement and safety training
- Parental and community involvement and networking, and parent training
- Professional development training for teachers, administrators, and school support staff (secretaries, custodians, bus drivers, food service staff, security and police staff, etc.)
- Proactive security measures (physical security measures, security technology, security/ police staffing, crime prevention policies and procedures, awareness training, etc.)
- Emergency / crisis preparedness planning, exercising, and training

• Strong partnerships with police, fire, emergency medical services, emergency management agencies, mental health providers, public health agencies, local and regional public officials, and other key community-based organizations.

Security technology can be a helpful component of a comprehensive school safety program. However, any security equipment must be a supplement to, but not a substitute for, a more comprehensive school safety approach. The first and best line of defense in school safety will always be a well-trained, highly-alert staff and student body.

Federal school safety policies, programming, and funding must reflect a framework which is comprehensive and balanced. An overemphasis on any single approach will detract from productive, sustained, and meaningful long-term school safety policy.

How Congress and the administration can improve school safety

This Congress and administration have a unique opportunity to stimulate a renewed priority and redefined approach to federal school safety, security, and emergency preparedness policy, programming, and funding.

Before discussing what schools need, it worth noting what schools do NOT need related to school safety. School and public safety officials do NOT need more studies, manuals, guides, templates, web sites, and regurgitation of best practices. They also do NOT need more centers, institutes, or federal contracted technical assistance providers.

Best practices in school safety, security, and emergency preparedness are well documented. Schools need the limited federal resources for school safety to be channeled directly to local education agencies to help them implement these best practices. While schools cannot look at school safety as a grant-funded luxury and should incorporate prevention, security, and preparedness measures into their operating budgets in the long term, federal and state grants provide the seed money to stimulate school safety programs which otherwise may not be developed in a timely manner in many school districts.

Congress and the Administration can further strengthen school safety, security, and emergency preparedness by:

1. Providing school administrators with specific guidance from the U.S. Department of Education on how federal stimulus funds may be used for school safety, security, and emergency preparedness needs. Discussions and documents on the education stimulus funds to date have focused on academic achievement and school operations.

2. Improving federal school safety data by incorporating more incident-based data into federal school safety data collection and by filling gaps and loopholes as described above in this testimony (see The SAVE Act and related recommendations). Improved federal school safety data will lead to improved federal school safety policy and funding.

3. During the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind (NCLB):

a. Address the unintended consequences of the "persistently dangerous schools" component of the original version of NCLB, which has encouraged the non-reporting of school crimes. "Persistently dangerous" has promoted crime underreporting, and puts forth a punitive label with no resources for improving school safety in those schools receiving this label.

b. Incorporate strong and supportive school safety, security, and emergency preparedness components into the reauthorized NCLB. Aside from the "persistently dangerous school" component, the original NCLB contained nothing significant about safe schools.

A reauthorized NCLB should include reasonable requirements and resources for comprehensive school safety, security, and emergency preparedness programs. School safety is directly related to academic achievement. Students cannot learn and teachers cannot teach at their maximum capacities if their thoughts and environments are consumed with concerns about safety. A strong school safety component in a reauthorized NCLB would benefit the whole child and would in turn strengthen opportunities for improved academic achievement.

4. Ensure federal school safety policies, programming, and funding reflect a comprehensive and balanced framework designed around a continuum of threats to school safety and a corresponding continuum of comprehensive school safety strategies.

a. Avoid single-cause, single-strategy legislation.

b. Create a permanent interagency working group of representatives from the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Justice, and Homeland Security to establish a formal structure for communication, planning, policy, and funding decisions combining their respective expertise areas and disciplines related to school

safety, security, and emergency preparedness. A periodic conversation or meeting, or a joint publication from these agencies is not enough. While each agency may in itself have a number of good school safety initiatives, coordination across agencies can lead to a more coordinated, comprehensive, and balanced federal approach to school safety. A permanent interagency working group, supported by state, local, and front-line experts in K-12 school safety, security, and emergency preparedness, can improve federal policy, program, and funding decisions on school safety and preparedness issues.

c. Encourage coordination, collaboration, and cooperation on school safety issues by the Congressional Committee members and staff overseeing Education, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, and Justice legislation and oversight.

d. Increase requirements for federal school safety grant recipients to form partnerships, protocols, training, and joint planning among schools, first responders, mental health, public health, and other community partner agencies.

e. Require education agency representation on federal, state, and local Homeland Security and emergency management advisory and coordinating committees. Schools and first responders must plan, prepare, and practice together.

5. Provide improved support for existing federal school safety programs which work and, modify or replace programs deemed ineffective with new programs. When we identify ineffective programs, it is in the best interest of our students to replace them as soon as possible with programs that do work. We have a responsibility to prioritize school safety funding and ensure that our students benefit from effective programs.

a. Two federal programs with very comprehensive approaches to school safety are the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) program (formerly Emergency Response and Crisis Management, ERCM), and the Safe Schools/Healthy Students program. The Department of Education is involved in funding of these programs. These programs encourage prevention, security, and preparedness strategies, long-term sustainability plans, and multi-agency collaboration on school safety, in their awarded grants. They have been well received by local school district recipients who have made meaningful progress under their grant awards. Funds for both programs declined over the past decade and should be considered for enhanced Congressional appropriations.

b. The Secure Our Schools (SOS) grant under the Department of Justice has proven to be helpful to recipient school districts to address school security and emergency preparedness equipment and related needs. Congress should continue to support this program.

c. Other helpful federal school safety funded initiatives have included School Resource Officer staffing and training programs (Justice); school transportation security (Homeland Security); and other drug and violence prevention programs (Education and, Health and Human Services) not referenced above.

d. While Department of Education school safety programs funded under the "National Programs" component provide useful direct resources to local school district recipients, they can also unintentionally limit the access to federal school safety funds by smaller, rural and suburban school districts that do not have full-time professional grant writers or the resources and/or ability to contract professional grant writing services for pursuing national program competitive grants. Larger, urban school districts, and those more affluent school districts with professional grant writing resources, often have a skewed advantage over smaller, rural and suburban schools. Methods for leveling the playing field should be explored if Congress, the Administration, and the Department of Education continue to add competitive national programs over other types of funding.

Concluding comments

Parents will forgive school and other public officials if school test scores go down. Parents are much less forgiving if something happens to the safety of their children which could have been prevented or better managed if it does occur. School safety is perhaps the only education priority over academic achievement in the eyes of parents, who understand that children must first be safe in order to learn.

Congress and the Administration have a wonderful opportunity to reinvigorate and redefine federal school safety, security, and emergency preparedness data, policy, and programming. Congress and the Administration are well positioned to reverse a decade-long trend of reduced funding for school safety programs. I encourage you to act swiftly on school safety.

I thank all of you for the honor of your invitation to present at this joint hearing today. I appreciate your leadership in holding this hearing, and would especially like to recognize Chairwoman McCarthy for her extraordinary leadership efforts and ongoing genuine commitment to school safety issues.

I stand available to answer any questions now or in writing subsequent to this hearing.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you, Mr. Trump.

Ms. Andrews?

Could you move closer to the microphone?

STATEMENT OF JOSIE ANDREWS, STUDENT, SCHOOL SAFETY ADVOCATE

Ms. JOSIE ANDREWS. I wrote the screenplay and all songs for the movie with help from my sister, Jackie, as a co-author of the two songs. And I know that you said, Ms. Chairwoman, that parents need to become proactive about bullying, but I also think that children do.

I wrote "Milo J High" because bullying has become an extremely important issue for kids and teens. Almost everyone goes through it in some form, including me.

Some kids experience bullying as a victim, being tormented physically and emotionally. Victims sometimes seem to be victims because they can't or won't stand up for themselves, but bullying is not the fault of the victim. Very often, when victims attempt to stand up for themselves, they are attacked verbally and physically, and they suffer terrible consequences.

There is always a ringleader who initiates bullying of the victim. Bullies aren't necessarily always the boy who is bigger than all the other kids and takes people's lunch money. The bully can also be the girl who makes mean comments about and to everyone and seems to get away with it and still be very popular.

But I don't think either of these two classifications of kids is the most important when we talk about understanding bullying. I think the people who play the most important part in bullying are the bystanders, the 99 percent of all the other kids, who know that it is wrong, but don't do anything about it. Those are the kids who can make the difference, and these are the kids who are the target audience of "Milo J High."

In most anti-bullying programs I have seen go through my school, the bully always gets caught in the end or realizes what they are doing is wrong, or the victim all of a sudden overthrows the bully and tells an adult, who solves the problem.

Or these approaches don't really work in real life. The victim is a victim because they can't stand up for themselves by themselves, and no one ever helps them. A lot of bystanders in a bullying situation will say, "I am just staying out of this," making parents and teachers proud of how they avoid the drama.

In reality, their non-involvement is increasing the problem. By doing nothing when you know something is wrong, you are making the problem a lot worse. A lot of kids don't want to say anything to the bully, because they are friends with the bully or they don't want to lose popularity.

The story of the bystanders is what "Milo J High" is about. And if one person tries to stand up, they will be crushed just like the victim. But when the 99 percent of the school, who knows bullying is wrong, stands for what together what they think is right, the bully doesn't have a fighting chance.

Bullying can start as something, making a hurtful comment, or building emotional scars for life, even murder and suicide. Bullying continues because the victims feel like they are alone. If the bystanders do what is right, even if by less popularity or losing friends who weren't even your friends in the real first place, the bullies—or the victims will realize that they are never really alone.

That is the message of "Milo J High," and that is the basis of the work my sister and I have done together. And now I am going to turn it over to her.

[The statement of Ms. Andrews follows:]

Prepared Statement of Josie Andrews

My name is Josie Andrews. I am the writer of the screenplay and music of "Milo J High,'" an upcoming musical movie about bullying. I wrote the screenplay and all ten songs for the movie, with help from my sister Jackie as a coauthor of two songs.

I wrote Milo J High because bullying has become an extremely important issue for kids and teens. Almost everyone goes through it in some form. Some kids experience bullying as a victim, being tormented physically and emotionally. Victims sometimes seem to be victims because they can't or won't stand up for themselves, but bullying is not the fault of the victim. Very often when victims attempt to stand up for themselves, they are attacked verbally and physically and they suffer terrible consequences. There is always a ring leader who initiates the bullying of the victim. Bullies aren't necessarily always the boy who is bigger than all the other kids and takes peoples' lunch money. The bully can also be the girl who makes mean comments about and to everyone and seems to get away with it and still be very popular. But I don't think either of these two classifications of kids is the most important when we try to understand bullying. I think the people who play the most important part in bullying are the bystanders—the ninety-nine percent of the kids who know that bullying is wrong but who don't do anything about it. Those are the kids who can make the difference.-and these kids are my target audience in Milo J High.

In most anti bullying programs I've seen go through my school, the bully always gets caught in the end, or realizes what they're doing is wrong, or the victim all of the sudden overthrows the bully or tells an adult who solves the problem. These approaches almost never work in real life. The victim is a victim because they can't stand up for themselves by themselves and no one ever helps them. A lot of bystanders in a bullying situation will say "I'm staying out of this" making parents and teachers proud of how they avoid drama. In reality, their non-involvement is what is increasing the problem. By doing nothing when you know something is wrong, you are making the problem a lot worse. A lot of kids don't want to say anything to the bully because they are friends with the bully and don't want to lose their popularity.

The story of the bystanders is the key to the story of. "Milo J High." The main character is an eighth grader named Josie. Josie's really a nice person, but she's in the popular group and one of the bully (Bryce's) best friends. When an overweight new girl, Wendy, moves to town, all she is looking for is to make a friend. She tries to befriend the popular girls who bluntly blow her off. When Wendy is persistent at trying to become friends with the "it girls," they start targeting and aggressively making fun of her. When a popular girl named Kay starts to feel bad and tries to be nice to Wendy, she loses all of the popular girls as friends. Josie is too scared after seeing what happened to Kay to stand up for Wendy, so she starts instant messaging her through a restricted screen name as her secret friend, signing off with her signature "xoxo pink." Wendy carries the print-outs of these conversations around at school like her only friend and when the popular girls discover Josie's signature at the bottom, they are outraged because she's betrayed them and they decide that Josie deserves pay back. They tell Wendy that her secret friend is Josie and that Josie's messages were just part of a cruel joke. Wendy is very saddened by this news, and almost commits suicide until Josie promises her it's not a joke and that she will show Wendy her true friendship at the dance that night. Josie befriends every kid who has ever been bullied by the popular clique and walks into the dance to see her conversations with Wendy projected on the walls—but she also realizes that half of the conversations weren't from her. To everyone's surprise, it turned out a lot of kids, even some of the popular ones, had also been Wendy's secret friends. They were all afraid to be her friend publicly for the same reason Josie was afraid. But when Josie stands up for Wendy, all the other bystanders join in, stand up, and tell the bully that her power over them is gone.

If one person tries to stand up, they will be crushed just like the victim. But when that 99 percent of the school who knows bullying is wrong stands together for what is right, the bully doesn't have a fighting chance. Bullying can start as someone making a hurtful comment and build to emotional scars for life or even murder or suicide. Bullying continues because the victims feel like they are alone. If the bystanders do what's right, even if that risks popularity, or losing friends who weren't even real friends, everyone will realize that they're never alone. That is the message of Milo J High and that is the basis of the work my sister and I have done together in our anti-bullying campaign. Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

STATEMENT OF JACQUELYN ANDREWS, STUDENT, SCHOOL SAFETY ADVOCATE

Ms. JACQUELYN ANDREWS. Thank you.

My name is Jacquelyn Andrews. I am 16 years old, and I go to the Lawrenceville School. I have spent the last 3 years focusing on a program that focuses on the 99.9 percent of the people who can make a difference in the bully in the victim's life, the bystanders.

I would like to tell you about a personal experience. In my grade school I knew this one girl who she and her best friend were the most popular girls in school. One day in fourth grade, her best friend was bullying this girl who was slightly overweight. This girl was disgusted by her best friend's actions and she did not take for this, so she went and said something to her best friend.

I, too, have experienced the pain. I was the victim of bullying myself. I have experienced the pain and the suffering caused by a bully from a bully in fourth grade, even though at school I used to be best friends with this girl.

One day in fourth grade, my best friend was brutally picking on this girl who was slightly overweight. Disgusted by my friend's actions, I decided to stand up for the victim, which ultimately led me to be the victim myself. If just one other person had stood up behind me, the bully never would have prevailed. But no one did.

Ironically, the victim stood up—ironically, the victim I had stood up for became the bully's best friend, and I became the target. The bystanders just watched.

The anti-bullying curriculum that I have created is based on a three-step program focusing on grades three through four, five through six, and seven through eight. While much bullying occurs in grades five and in eight—I believe it is crucial that we reach students in third and fourth grade.

The programs are designed for 30 hours per year. The lower grade curriculum includes requiring students to draw and write picture books about how to form alliances against bullies, creating and signing creeds, posted—and buddy systems.

The higher grade curriculum includes requiring students to read and summarize entries by bullied students on international Web sites and to create stories about how these students suffer in the end. So I also agree about what my curriculum emphasizes on how bystanders can make the right choice and become a part of the solution to the bullying crisis.

This group can grow out of the message of my sister's upcoming movie, "Milo J High." After I co-wrote some of the songs for the movie, I decided to take the next step and develop the program, which hopefully will lead to major improvements in the way that our school teaches about the academic of bullying.

Bystanders need to stand up to a bully and change another life. Each day each one of us can be that person who takes a stand. Every day we have decisions to make. Yesterday another person was bullied because no one chose to do anything. Today is the day we stand up. Tomorrow, one less child is a victim.

Thank you for this opportunity.

[The statement of Ms. Andrews follows:]

Prepared Statement of Jacquelyn Andrews

My name is Jackie Andrews, and I am 16 years old. I am from Haddon Heights, New Jersey, and I am a student at The Lawrenceville School. I am here today to talk about my work against the national epidemic of bullying.

When it comes to bullying, it takes ONE VOICE.

It's not about the victim who needs a voice or the bully who the bully to find a brain, it's about the 99.9% who know that bullying is wrong, yet do nothing.

A victim is a victim because he can't stand up for himself. Bullies take the actions they do because they don't know what they are doing is wrong. What this world needs is to stop focusing only on the victim's effort to stand up for himself or the bully's effort to realize what he is doing is wrong and become nice—we have tried these approaches in the past and they too often have been ineffective. A future without bullying is dependent on the 99.9% of the people who can make a difference—the people who know that bullying is wrong, but who have thus far have done nothing to stop it. In my book, this 99.9 percent is as bad as the bully himself because the bully doesn't know better * * * they do.

We are experiencing an epidemic of bullying among the young people of our nation. Shocking numbers of young people report frequent and recurring instances of verbal and psychological abuse. Bullying is a problem that cuts across racial, economic, religious and other social categories, and results in the mounting tragedy of depression, substance abuse, suicide, and retaliatory violence. In recognition of this problem, at least 28 states have adopted a legal requirement that schools incorporate anti-bullying programs into their curricula. To date, these programs have largely failed to stem the tide of the bullying epidemic.

I have spent the last three years creating an anti-bullying program that focuses more on the 99.9% of the people who can make a difference in a bully and a victim's life: the bystanders. My program is based on painful personal experiences. I was a victim of bullying myself. I have experienced the pain and suffering caused by a bully from as early as 4th grade. In grade school, I used to be best friends with the school's bully. One day in 4th grade, my best friend was brutally picking on this girl who was slightly overweight. Disgusted by my friend's actions, I decided to stand up for the victim, which ultimately led me to be the victim myself. If just one person other person had stood behind me, the bully never would have prevailed. But no one did. Ironically, the victim I stood up for stopped being the target and soon became the new best friend of the bully, while I became the target. The bystanders, meanwhile, just watched.

The anti-bullying curriculum I have created is based on a three step program focusing on grades 3-4, 5-6 and 7-8. While much bullying occurs in grades 5-8, I believe it is crucial that we reach students in the 3rd and 4th grade. The programs are designed for 30 hours per year. The lower grade curriculum includes requiring students to draw and write picture books about how to form alliances against bullies, creating and signing creeds, poster contests, and "buddy systems." The higher grade curriculum includes requiring students to read and synopsize entries by bullied students on international websites and to create stories about how these students' suffering began. For all three grade levels, my curriculum emphasizes how bystanders can make the right choice and become a part of the solution to the bullying crisis. This curriculum grew out of the message of my sister's upcoming movie "Milo J High." After I co-wrote some of the songs in the movie, I decided to take the next step and to develop my program, which hopefully will lead to major improvements in the way our schools teach about the epidemic of bullying.

Bystanders need to stand up to a bully and change another's life forever. Each day, each one of us can be that person who takes a stand. Every day we have decisions to make. Yesterday one more person was bullied because one more person chose to do nothing. Today is the day we stand up. Tomorrow, one less child is a victim.

Thank you for this opportunity, and I look forward to your questions.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you very much.

Ms. Kaufmann?

STATEMENT OF RONA KAUFMANN, PRINCIPAL, WILLIAM PENN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Ms. KAUFMANN. Chairwoman McCarthy, Ranking Member Platts and members of this Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities and the Subcommittee on Early Childhood Elementary and Secondary Education, thank you for inviting me to testify today.

I am Rona Kaufmann, principal of William Penn Senior High School in York, Pennsylvania. A longtime educator—28 years, the last 6 as a secondary principal—I can tell you I have a sincere passion for urban education. The middle school that I served from 2003 to 2008 contains a diverse population of students with excessive discipline problems, and upon my arrival I found there to be violence, intimidation and gang presence.

There was, however, a core group of teachers there. We formed a school leadership team and believed that character could be delivered by everyone in the school. Our basic beliefs about school climate and its connection to character education drove us on a path that took us about 5 years.

We infused character education into our daily routines and rituals. We started this slowly with morning announcements—make it a great day or not, the choice is yours—with lots of wisdom from lots of wise people.

We recognized and model positive character traits and incorporated them into our daily practice. We taught decision-making skills, facilitated discussions about and practice of proper manners, and delivered lessons on establishing trust and building relationships, also on community building and being a part of something larger than yourself.

We encouraged student participation in and ownership of our school. We created a student news desk that delivered news daily and focused on positive things that were happening in our school. We also created a student security team, students who patrolled our halls and made sure that everything was going well.

We held community events and celebrated our diversity, from "Dancing with the Stars" for National Hispanic Heritage Month to our soul food cook-off during Black History Month. We asked the community to join us in our efforts.

And then something miraculous happened. We opened our character education room. We talked self-discovery, self-control. We taught students how to personally interact with each other in a positive way. We examined real urban neighborhood problems with our students and developed and expanded their repertoire of positive social and interpersonal skills.

Those universal values that we all know and love—we emphasize those throughout the school with character education rooms serving as our hub. We initiated a school wide effective behavior support program, gave students incentives for doing good things.

We reinstituted a peer mediation program and conflict resolution program. Our home-school communication encouraged our community members to engage. We had a healthy backpack initiative and

sponsored other service learning projects—as a result, 60 percent reduction in discipline referrals.

They went from 5,000 upon my arrival, and that is annually, to less than 1,200. It was a climate shift—positive descriptions of students. There was no vandalism, no graffiti. The halls were quieter and calmer. They were fewer physical confrontations and less reported incidents of bullying in our school.

Our character education teacher, Angela Kirkessner, was nominated for an award to the Pennsylvania Rising Star of Teaching in September of 2008, and we now serve at Hannah Penn as a model program for other urban middle schools in Pennsylvania.

I have expanded it to our high school, because I wanted to take it with me when I transferred there in September. Serious incidents were down this year. The number of fights were significantly reduced this year. Our district is hoping to expand our character ed initiative to our other secondary schools, including our alternative building.

The core purpose of public education is to prepare our students for citizenship in a democratic and diverse society. Cooperative learning, direct teaching of social and emotional skills, and mentoring are key pieces of any character education program.

Relationship building forms the foundation of a caring community, where values are practiced daily in and out of the classroom, and service learning abounds. True learning community is what can be created with character education as its hub in creating an environment in which every student can be respected and valued as a unique individual.

Thank you.

[The statement of Ms. Kaufmann follows:]

Prepared Statement of Rona C. Kaufmann, Principal, William Penn Senior High School, York, Pennsylvania

Chairwoman McCarthy, Ranking Member Platts and members of the Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities and the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education, thank you for inviting me to testify today. I am Rona Kaufmann, Principal of William Penn Senior High School in York, Pennsylvania.

Demographics and Research-Based Background Information

The School District of the City of York encompasses five square miles and is responsible for educating approximately 6,000 students in Kindergarten through grade 12. The district is comprised of six elementary buildings, two middle schools, an alternative school serving students in grades six through nine, and one high school. From 2003 until 2008, I served as the principal of Hannah Penn Middle School, the larger of the two district middle schools. Hannah Penn is a Title I school; 80% of the families are economically disadvantaged. The student population is 85% minority with a steadily growing Latino population.

Discipline referrals for the first two years of my tenure totaled in excess of 5,000 annually and included 1,200 external and internal suspensions. We buried three students, two from gun shots. Staff turnover was historically high; however, there was a core group of strong, compassionate, dedicated teachers in the building. The School Leadership Team was formed.

We agreed on some basic beliefs. We believe that we are all character educators, that individually and collectively, we help shape the character of the students with whom we come in contact daily. We also believe, as Greer (2007) suggests, that character education is directly connected to the school climate and takes time to develop. Together, we began to promote some traditions, rituals, and ceremonies. In addition, we pursued implementation of new programs and initiatives—one of those initiatives being the introduction of character education.

We began to infuse character education into our daily routines slowly at Hannah Penn. Morning announcements included daily messages from Project Wisdom (2004), providing students with "something to think about * * *" as a start to their day. The school's physical environment was carefully maintained by the custodial department and staff members were expected to model positive character traits, two indicators found to be common across schools with high levels of academic achievement and thoughtful character education programs (Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, & Smith, 2006). Students were introduced to common character traits, and designed and displayed posters representing these same character traits in the school cafeteria.

From those basic beginnings, our character education initiative evolved and became more fully infused into the school curriculum. Students engaged in ethical decision making, were prompted and coached to exhibit proper manners, and received lessons on proper behavior and establishing community—keys to effective character education (Gilness, 2003). Students were also expected to contribute to the school in meaningful ways. A Hannah Penn News Desk, from which morning announcements were delivered via close circuit, and an organized Student Security Team, a group of students who were responsible for patrolling the hallways and common areas for the safety of everyone, allowed students to gain ownership of their school. We celebrated our diversity with student-led programs in honor of National Hispanic Heritage Month and Black History Month. By design, the community played a significant role in our celebrations.

During the 2007-2008 school year, our in-school suspension room was converted to a Character Education Room, staffed by a certified teacher, in which students were actively engaged in developing strategies to manage their attitudes, values, anger, and interactions with others. The character education teacher also engaged students in activities designed to promote self-discovery. Storytelling, use of picture books, and the incorporation of moral dilemmas into the curriculum provided opportunities for students to practice ethical decision-making and problem-solving. Real urban neighborhood problems were analyzed and openly discussed, as students were encouraged to expand their repertoire of positive social and interpersonal skills. Citizenship and service learning were components of the Character Education Room curriculum as well, both serving not only to make school and education more relevant to students, but to deepen learning through a process that provides time for reflection (Berger-Kaye, 2006).

Universal values were introduced and integrated throughout the academic curriculum of the school, all connected back to the character hub of the school, the Character Education Room. The character education teacher initiated the discussion centered on the value for the month and shared ideas and strategies for its infusion across all content areas with the rest of the professional staff. For example, true historical stories in the Social Studies classroom were useful in engaging students to reflect upon values (Sanchez, 2006). Our character education teacher encouraged such storytelling and values-related discussions. In addition, school-wide behavior supports, including student recognition and a variety of incentives, were implemented to encourage students to make positive behavior choices. Peer mediation and conflict resolution skills were incorporated into the school culture. We tried to insure that good choices consistently yielded students positive recognition and privileges.

Principal's Newsletters reserved space each month for character education topics and suggestions for follow-up activities or discussions at home. Parents were informed and expected to reinforce the desired behaviors and attitudes. This provided a more consistent, unified approach to the improvement of student behavior and school culture. We have engaged our surrounding community in supporting our efforts with regard to character education. For example, students worked in conjunction with the local food bank to deliver healthy food to needy families. Others participated in community-based service learning projects. By bridging social capital, we established shared responsibility for student character development and created links with social agencies so that student needs beyond the scope of the school community could be effectively addressed.

Evaluation and Additional Program Development

At Hannah Penn, there was a 60% reduction in the number of discipline referrals in the school during the 2007-2008 school year. This was a noticeable and welcomed change. There was a significant climate shift in the building, one that was obvious to the staff members who had been present during the five years of my tenure.

In end-of-the-year surveys, leadership team members described our students as more respectful, helpful, honest, and responsible. Vandalism in the school had virtually disappeared, students were quieter and calmer in the hallways, and there

were fewer physical confrontations. Students reported less incidents of perceived bullying. Other urban middle schools sent staff members to visit our school and used our Character Education Room as a model on which to base their own programs. In September, Angila Kirkessner, the Hannah Penn character education teacher, received the Pennsylvania Rising Stars of Teaching award from the U.S. Department of Education.

When I was reassigned to William Penn Senior High School at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year due to the sudden resignation of the former principal, I was determined to take the character education initiative with me. I immediately began to infuse character education into the daily routine by delivering a Project Wisdom (2004) message using our WPTV news network each morning. The current central administration supported my request for the creation of a character education position for the high school and in January, our Character Education Room officially opened at William Penn. Staff feedback was very positive and the numbers of serious incidents and student fights significantly decreased during the school year.

Due to the positive results from both the Hannah Penn and William Penn programs, the character education initiative in our district will be expanded for the upcoming school year. A second position has been created at the high school, and positions have also been created for the second middle school, Edgar Fahs Smith, as well as our district-operated alternative school. Through collaborative work, the district character education teachers will be able to research, share, and implement best teaching practices aimed at our district's mission—to empower all learners to become responsible, productive citizens.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The core purpose of public education is to prepare students for citizenship in a democratic and diverse society. Academic achievement and character education are critical to this core purpose and must exist side by side. In addition to delivering strong academic content through effective instructional strategies, teachers must model professionalism and caring behaviors. They must ask students to demonstrate caring for others, and exhibit positive character traits in the school setting.

Effective programs build in structures for ongoing professional development. Character education is no exception. Cooperative learning, direct teaching of social-emotional skills, mentoring, and use of multiple strategies, along with integration into the academic curriculum, are all key components of character education programs. Of equal importance is a commitment to a multi-year process, as character education requires time and patience.

Effective character education in the future is likely to be designed holistically, with integration of character traits and ethical thinking into every aspect of school life. In the School District of the City of York, we will continue to work towards this full infusion of character education into every aspect of our school community. Relationship building forms the foundation of any school and building a caring community captures the essence of the character education movement. In such a community, values become part of everyday lessons and are instructed and practiced in and out of the classroom. Hypothetical questions are posed and lead to productive ethical discussions. Service learning affords opportunities for transforming experiences, in addition to connecting students to the community at large. These are the key components of character education, the common denominator that will help schools reach their goals now and in the future.

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Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you, Ms. Kaufmann.

Mr. Riach?

STATEMENT OF STEVE RIACH, FOUNDER AND BOARD CHAIRMAN, HEART OF A CHAMPION FOUNDATION

Mr. RIACH. Chairwoman McCarthy, Chairman Kildee and Ranking Member Platts and distinguished members of the committee, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to come and share my testimony with you this morning. It is an honor to be here and share with you about our successful character development program called "Heart of a Champion."

As the father of four, ages 18 to 5, I am not only good and busy, but I am also very thankful for all of you taking this subject very seriously and wanting to strengthen school safety, which is vitally important for our kids and for the future of our nation.

Let me tell you a bit about Heart of a Champion. It is a nonprofit organization that was founded in 1997 by business leaders and sports team owners and other concerned individuals around the country, who had a desire to impact the lives of young people.

In 1997 we began 4 years of extensive research with educators around the country and the Department of Education and other organizations, people like Linda McKay, who is in this room today, to find out what the landscape of character education was like in America. And we learned some very interesting things during that time that helped us shape our program.

We were told by the undersecretary of education at that time that if we could hit on all five markers that we had learned about during our research time, that we would create a program that would be able to provide measurable results. And thankfully, over the last 8 years in 23 states and public schools, private schools, afterschool programs, juvenile justice facilities, we have seen just that.

Let me tell you why I think I am here. It is to tell you what we have learned. One of the things that we have learned in our research was that students themselves recognize that the issue of school safety is not just an issue of what can be done with security guards, metal detectors and surveillance cameras.

We conducted, along with two distinguished members from our home state, the state of Texas, state schools summits during our research time. And in those state schools summits, students, much like the Andrews sisters here, told us that emotional safety was every bit a concern as physical safety to them.

In fact, when those students were polled about which items would create a safer environment on their campus, when they were asked about metal detectors and security guards and surveillance cameras, those individual items drew responses of between 11 and 23 percent of the students saying that they felt those would create a safer environment on their schools.

When they were asked about a consistent character education program deployed consistently over a long period of time, that number shot up to 74 percent. Seventy-four percent of those students told us that in order to create a safe school environment, a consistent character education program was the real solution.

Essentially, what they told us was if you can change the heart of the student sitting at the desk next to me, you will create a safer school. With that information we launched our program and have been privileged to work with wonderful partners, who have made this program very successful.

The second thing that we learned was that we needed partners to make it successful, because education funding is at a minimum. Typically, when they go to a school and they look at our content, or they ask us to come and look at our curriculum, they say this is the best character education program we have ever seen. How much does it cost?

When we tell them it is only $10 a student for the entire year, a 9-month curriculum used on a weekly basis, sometimes a daily basis throughout the school, and they say, "That is amazing. How can you do it for $10 a student?" And we say, "Well, we really truly are a nonprofit."

But then they say, "We might not be able to afford that. We can only afford $1 or $4 or $3 a student. Can you help us find funding?"

Thankfully, we have had partners like the Kansas City Chiefs or Houston Texans, NFL football teams or Express Employment Professionals or Coca-Cola or, in the case of one individual, Torii Hunter, a major league baseball player from the Los Angeles Angels in Anaheim, who said, "I will put money in to underwrite my old school District in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and I will also underwrite Orange County, where I play now, and Minneapolis, where I used to play, and Las Vegas", where we work with the Andre Agassi Preparatory Academy."

It has been those sources, because funding has been cut, and I believe this year's budget zeroed out character education, those sources that have enabled students to receive this program. So that is the second thing we learned is that we need help in funding.

The third thing we learned is that character education works; if it is effective, it creates change. Our program has created change across the board with attitudinal and behavioral changes positively in students of all types, all genders, all races, in high economic areas and in underserved areas.

We have seen change. We have seen attitudinal and behavioral change. We have seen a decrease in violent behaviors. We have seen a decrease in referrals. We have seen a decrease in bullying. We have seen an increase—92 percent—in self-esteem in individuals. We have also seen, as a byproduct, an increase in GPAs by 47 percent.

What we have learned throughout the process is that if we are really committed to seeing change in violent activities on school campuses, it takes more than addressing those issues that would be solved by security guards, surveillance cameras and metal detectors.

It takes a dedicated effort to change the heart, as those students told us, the heart of the individual sitting in the desk next to me. And if I can change the heart, I can change the culture. And we have seen that from Grand Rapids, Michigan, to San Diego, California, to Tacoma, Washington, to New York City, to Rikers Island

prison with the most violent teen offenders in the state of New York.

Everywhere we have been, we have seen that change. And by changing the heart, we have changed the behavior and decreased violent behavior. I thank you so much for allowing me to be here, and I am happy to answer questions. And thank you for what you are doing.

[The statement of Mr. Riach follows:]

Prepared Statement of Steve Riach, Founder and Board Member, Heart of a Champion Foundataion

Chairwoman McCarthy, Chairman Kildee, Ranking Members Platts and Castle, and distinguished members of the Committee: It is an honor for me to provide testimony to you today on our very successful character development program called "Heart of a Champion". I wish to commend each of the Members for spending your time today on the topic of strengthening school safety which is vitally important to our children and the future of our nation.

I was asked to testify today because the Heart of a Champion program is applicable to and proven to be equally successful in school environments, after-school programs, and juvenile justice settings. It has a proven record of success whose results have been independently verified and qualitatively measured. It is my view that bullying in our nation's schools can only effectively be minimized by addressing all of the underlying factors that a comprehensive character development program like Heart of a Champion identifies.

Heart of a Champion Foundation is a nonprofit organization founded in 1997 by a group of business leaders and sports team owners who shared a common concern for the nation's youth and sought to find a way to make a positive impact on their culture. As we began to conduct extensive research, it became apparent that one of the most significant areas of need was for quality, effective character development programs that would instill character and ethics into young people.

Our board and staff spent nearly four years researching and collaborating with educators from across the country, the Department of Education, and other agencies, to understand the landscape of character education in the U.S. These efforts provided us with answers to questions of efficacy regarding content, presentation and delivery of a successful character program. We came to the following five conclusions:

1) In terms of demographics, the greatest area of need is at the middle school and junior high level. This was confirmed by the vast majority of educators with whom we worked, as well as the three-year study conducted by the United States Secret Service in the aftermath of the rash of school shootings in the late 1990's.

2) Most character education programs lack the ability to engage students, particularly with this generation that we have called the "sight and sound" generation.

3) Most programs lack substantive content—content that would not only teach concepts, but also teach application of those concepts in a relevant way.

4) Most programs lack a delivery model that was consistent and deployment that was long-term.

5) Most programs have no mechanism to determine their efficacy.

The Under Secretary of the Department of Education at that time made it clear to us that any program which could effectively address these deficiencies had a substantial chance to be successful in actually producing behavioral change.

In 2001, following those guidelines after nearly four years in research and development, we launched the Heart of a Champion program in Plano, Texas and Brooklyn, New York, with two very diverse populations. One involved upper middle class students while the other involved underserved and predominantly minority students. The results in both cases were nearly identical in terms of attitudinal and behavioral change. The data validated that we had indeed achieved what had been asked to deliver.

Since 2001, we have deployed the program to 23 states, with similar measurable results.

What does this have to do with school safety issues? A lot, actually.

At the genesis of our program we collaborated with two Members of Congress in our home state of Texas on Safe School Summits. At each of these summits 500 secondary school students convened to discuss school safety issues. The data derived from the students amazed even the Members.

At both of these Safe School Summits, the students told us that when they go to school on a daily basis, they don't feel physically unsafe. The vast majority were not fearful of a Columbine incident, or of being accosted in the restroom. However, the vast majority did express feelings of emotional insecurity. Many felt there was no one they could trust, that they were not accepted, of that they couldn't connect. It was clear that greater safety issues were from emotional rather than physical concerns.

When students were asked what elements would make them feel safer on campus, their answers corresponded to this revelation. When asked about security guards, hall monitors, surveillance cameras, and metal detectors 11-23% of students said each of these items would make them feel safer. Yet, when they were asked about the consistent deployment of a character program on campus, 74% of these students said this would make them feel safer.

In post-survey focus groups, students summarized issues addressed at the Safe School Summit by explaining that only by changing the heart of the student sitting beside them could you create a safe school. Thus, the impetus for us to create the Heart of a Champion character development program.

It was clear to us that students recognized that the heart of the problem was itself a heart problem. Physical safety is a byproduct of emotional safety.

Much has been said and written about social and emotional intelligence over the past few years, but based on our work over the past 8 years, we believe that this is clearly the key to safer schools. Rather than focus on symptoms, the focus of programs must be on root cause behaviors to create any substantive and enduring change. We have seen this play out from the program's inception.

Our assessments have produced empirical data which demonstrates that students who participate in the Heart of a Champion program realize significant attitudinal and behavioral change. In addition, our data also demonstrates a decrease in violent behavior, a decrease in drug and alcohol use, a decrease in referrals and in bullying incidents, and an increase in grade point averages. In addressing root cause issues and providing training in social and emotional intelligence, we are seeing proven, measureable change which we believe to be profound.

The Heart of a Champion program is a comprehensive three-year curriculum, designed for implementation throughout a student's entire middle or junior high school experience. The program is taught throughout each nine-month school year, focusing on nine different core character traits each month: Commitment, Leadership, Perseverance, Teamwork, Respect, Integrity, Responsibility, Self Control or Compassion.

Under each of these traits the curriculum highlights real people who have exemplified these attributes, and details the consequences of their actions. Rather than telling students what not to do, the Heart of a Champion program provides them with examples—or role models if you will—of those who have made good choices, and allows them to learn about, and discover first-hand, the results of such choices. The curriculum includes some recognizable individuals from sports and entertainment industries, such as Indianapolis Colts head coach Tony Dungy and musician Bono from the band U2. Some lesser known individuals, like Louis Daniels—a homeless student who ended up receiving a scholarship to Yale—are also highlighted in the program. There are even a few members of Congress in our materials.

The men and women profiled in the program serve as models for the students and give them an ideal to shoot for and an idea of what they themselves can achieve. One of those role models has chosen to join me this morning and she is sitting right behind me. Anne Abernathy is a 6-time Olympian known fondly as "Grandma Luge" she is the only female to compete in 6 Olympics and is the oldest female Olympic competitor in the history of the Games. Her story as an overcomer has captivated many students. She has beaten cancer once and has overcome 12 knee surgeries and several broken bones. She is now in the process of overcoming cancer a second time. She has joined me this morning in support of character education and in particular Heart of a Champion as a solution to the problem of school safety. Anne, thank you for being here.

In the Heart of a Champion program, during each month, students work through a curriculum workbook focusing on one of the specific trait mentioned earlier. Each workbook contains weekly lessons delving deeply into a different aspect of that trait. With video segments, posters, online applications, critical thinking and decision-making exercises, and rewards and reinforcement elements being utilized on a weekly—and sometimes daily basis—students learn about character with the same frequency they do in any of their core subjects. With this degree of emphasis and consistency, students intuitively see that society values their depth of character as much their level of performance in the classroom.

Heart of a Champion directly trains and certifies teachers, helping them to deliver the program as a normal part of their daily classroom activities, and proving to enhance the relationships that teachers have with students. Many have said, "I feel like I am more than just a teacher now, I feel like I am making a greater impact in my students' lives."

The program's impact is not only seen through such anecdotal data such as this, but also through empirical data derived through pre and post program assessments. Beyond ROI, a leader in diagnostic and measurement services with organizations across the U.S., provides complete pre and post measurements and data reports. The data demonstrates significant attitudinal and behavioral change in students participating in the program. Moreover, the program is also proven to deliver critical measurable results such as reduced referrals, reduced alcohol and drug use (as much as 40%), 92% increase in self-esteem, decreased violent behaviors including bullying, and increased grade averages—as much as 47%.

What has been so exciting for us is that we are not only seeing these results in public schools in the 23 states we now deploy the program, but also in after-school outlets such as the Boys & Girls Clubs, and in juvenile justice facilities such as Rikers Island prison in New York, a maximum security facility that houses the most violent teen offenders in New York, ages 16-18. Heart of a Champion is also deployed to the Gainesville State School in North Texas, another maximum security facility which houses the most violent teen offenders ages 13-19. In fact, Warden Edmund Duffy at Rikers Island emailed me a couple of weeks ago to tell me that the guards who oversee the unit where the Heart of a Champion program is deployed recently asked him "what have you done to these kids? They are changing."

Regardless of the population—schools, after school or juvenile justice—the program continues to produce similar results. It is changing the "hearts" of the students. As it changes the "heart", changes in attitude, behavior and performance result. We are seeing what the students of those Safe School Summits suggested—if you change the heart of the student in the desk next to me, you will create a safer environment at our school.

We have seen that this approach works to create change—change that is demonstrated, measurable and sustained. When schools deploy such an approach, they see the school culture change. The school becomes a safer and better place.

Heart of a Champion has been labeled a model program. For that we are appreciative. However, we are most grateful that it is working. We are also grateful for the partners who have provided for such results.

Because funding for education has been tight in the majority of schools and school districts we serve, and because character education funding specifically has been zeroed in this year's federal budget, we have developed a series of successful private-public partnerships to generate funding for the program. We have great corporate partners in NFL teams like the Kansas City Chiefs and the Houston Texans, whose owners (The Hunt and McNair families) are completely committed to impacting the lives of kids. Another example is Express Employment Professionals, whose owner Bob Funk shares the same passion. In other areas we have partners like Coca-Cola, energy companies, and private foundations to assure students can benefit from the program.

We even have caring individuals who have stepped in to make sure students can receive the program. Working with Major League Baseball All-Star Torii Hunter of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim California, we created the Torii Hunter Project. Torii personally underwrites the cost of the program for every middle school student in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, where Torii grew up, as well as students in Orange County, California—where the Angels match Torii's contributions. In Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Las Vegas, Nevada, we have partnered with the Andre Agassi Preparatory Academy.

In all of these locations, as in a total of 23 States, we are privileged to work with schools and other locations to deploy the program and we continue to see measurable positive change. From the poorest schools of New York City, to more affluent ones in Orange County, California. From inner city Philadelphia to Grand Rapids, Michigan. From Chesapeake, Virginia to Mesa, Arizona. From San Antonio to Houston to Lubbock to Dallas. From Brooklyn to Las Vegas to Tacoma, Washington. Urban or rural, upper class or underserved, east or west, male or female, school or prison—the data demonstrates this program works to create heart change no matter the population. And when heart change occurs, a culture is transformed.

This is why Heart of a Champion exists—to change culture. It is successful because of the focus on root-cause issues rather than symptoms. Heart of a Champion has learned that if we truly wish to see results—in creating safer schools and safer kids—then we must change the heart. We are grateful to have the opportunity to see that change occur.

Again, I thank you for your leadership and for the opportunity to come and share with you this morning what we have learned. I would be happy to discuss with any of the Members or your staff how the Heart of a Champion program can be used in schools and juvenile facilities in your Congressional Districts or States, or to provide advice on what actions could be taken through future legislation to make it easier for school districts and juvenile facilities to adopt effective character development programs like Heart of a Champion.

Thank you.

Educators Comments on Heart of a Champion

We are thrilled with the response from our members who are going through the Heart of a Champion program at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Dallas! It provides a consistent message that all kids need to hear as much as possible; and that is the importance of good character and personal responsibility.

Misti Potter
VP, Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Dallas

As an educator for over 45 years, I believe the Heart of a Champion Foundation has truly created a quiet revolution wherever it is given an opportunity to support young people in thinking about their lives and how they want to live out their dreams.

Pat Orlowski
Kansas City Public Schools

I've been in public education for 37 years now, and I've seen every character program available. This is the very best character program I have seen.

Marilyn Brooks
Assistant Superintendent, Plano ISD

What an awesome way to impact students in the things that matter most in life – building good citizens for our society.

Sara Bonser
Principal, Hendrick Middle School

The teachers were by the fourth or fifth week coming to me and saying, 'This is good. I like this,' and were having fun with it. They were starting to learn a lot about their kids that they would have never learned just through their normal classes.

Charles Pickitt
Principal, North Junior High

The program is very useful because of the lifelike situations that our members can use to keep them out of trouble but also empower them to be responsible citizens.

Kevin Foster
Boys and Girls Clubs of Tarrant County

Sponsor Comments on Heart of a Champion

Heart of a Champion has proven themselves to be in invaluable partner in our community program. The curriculum they provide is first rate, not only in terms of content, but also in terms of the way the materials are delivered. The professionalism of HOC has also manifested itself in the construction of collateral materials supporting our program, and in the framework they customized that enables the execution of our program. HOC is a crucial and respected partner in one of our most strategic and important initiatives.

Ben Lawson
Director of Bottler Sales and Marketing
Coca-Cola North America - Southwest Region

We consider Heart of a Champion to be our flagship program in character development. The Heart of a Champion material is perhaps the most substantive program in character education and we are proud to serve the Houston community in this manner."

Robert McNair
Chairman, Houston Texans

We consider Heart of a Champion's character education program to be a significant investment in the children of the communities we serve. HOC engages this critical generation of young people by providing valuable lessons about integrity, perseverance, commitment and teamwork. We have been honored to bring this unique and effective program to Kansas City.

Clark Hunt
Owner, Kansas City Chiefs

We believe in the ability of the Heart of a Champion Foundation to positively and powerfully impact America's youth. Together, we can develop and influence positive character traits that will enrich their future.

Robert A. Funk
Chairman & CEO, Express Employment Pros

Teamwork for Excellence

PLANO
Independent School District

October 19, 2004

To Whom It May Concern:

Many character education programs come to me through direct mail, email, and telephone solicitations. I've reviewed more than a dozen during the past few years without finding one which truly met my expectations for a character education program for Plano ISD middle school students.

Heart of a Champion caught my attention at once with both presentation and content. After sharing the program with our district middle school principals, who shared my enthusiasm, we began using the program three years ago.

The program is well-planned and attractively packaged to appeal to both teachers and students. It is a valuable addition to our middle school instruction.

Because of the modular components, each school has been able to tailor the program to fit its scheduling and staffing. Schools use the colorful Heart of a Champion posters and other materials to keep strong character education messages in front of their students.

Working with the Heart of a Champion organization is a delight. They have taken feedback from teachers and administrators and continued to improve the content of an already strong program.

In my opinion, Heart of a Champion is the best character education program I have seen. The people associated with the program are easy to work with and responsive to our needs. They are committed to young people and to working with educators to provide a quality character education program for our children.

I'm proud that Plano ISD middle school principals have chosen to embrace and support Heart of a Champion.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Brooks

Marilyn Brooks,
Associate Superintendent
For Curriculum and Instruction

Arizona
East Valley High School (Mesa)
Chino Valley High School

Arkansas
Pine Bluff Schools
Watson Chapel School District
Dollarway Public Schools
Whitehall Public Schools

California
Miracles Program (San Diego)
Miracles Program (San Jose)
University Charter Middle School (Camarillo)
South Junior High (Anaheim)
Savannah Schools (Anaheim)

Florida
Lely High School (Naples)
Nova Middle School (Davie)
Broward County Public Schools

Georgia
Miracles Program (Atlanta)

Idaho
Midway Middle School (Rigby)

Illinois
Miracles Program (Chicago)

Kansas
Youth Leadership Foundation (Manhattan)
Central Middle School (Kansas City)
Regional Prevention Center of Kansas (Girard)

Maryland
Hope Worldwide (Baltimore)
Newport Mill Middle School (Kensington)

Michigan
CA Frost Middle School (Grand Rapids)
Grand Rapids Montessori
Martin Luther King Middle School (Grand Rapids)
Sherwood Middle School (Grand Rapids)
Southwest Community (Grand Rapids)
Alger Middle School (Grand Rapids)
Burton Middle School (Grand Rapids)
Ford Middle School (Grand Rapids)
Harrison Middle School (Grand Rapids)
Riverside Middle School (Grand Rapids)
Westwood Middle School (Grand Rapids)
West Junior High (Traverse City)
East Junior High (Traverse City)

Minnesota
Saint Paul Public Schools

Missouri
Belton High School (Belton)
Center Middle School (Kansas City)
Campbell Middle School (Lee's Summit)
Grandview Middle School
Pleasant Lea Middle School (Lee's Summit)
Summit Lakes Middle School (Lee's Summit)
Smith-Cotton High School (Sedalia)

Nevada
Andre Agassi Preparatory Academy (Las Vegas, NV)

New York
Grace Faith Church (NYC)
IS 152 (NYC)
City College Academy of the Arts (NYC)
Riker's Island (NYC)

Oklahoma
Belle Isle Middle School (OKC)
Jackson Middle School (OKC)
Jefferson Middle School (OKC)
Rogers Middle School (OKC)
Roosevelt Middle School (OKC)
Webster Middle School (OKC)
Classen Middle School (OKC)
Taft Middle School (OKC)
Douglas Middle School (OKC)
John Marshall Middle School (OKC)
Centennial High School (OKC)
Northeast Middle School (OKC)
SeeWorth Academy (OKC)
About Face Academy (OKC)
Western Heights Middle School (OKC)
Independence Charter Middle School (OKC)
Millwood Middle School (OKC)
Crutcho Middle School

Pennsylvania
Wissahickon Middle School (Ambler)

Texas
Thomas Middle School (Houston)
EO Smith Middle School (Houston)
Woodson Middle School (Houston)
Welch Middle School (Houston)
Dowling Middle School (Houston)
Cullen Middle School (Houtson)
Morton Ranch Junior High (Katy)
Beckendorff Junior High (Katy)
Rescue Youth Mentoring Program (Humble)
Boys and Girls Clubs of Houston
The Briarwood School (Houston)
Wunderlich Intermediate School (Klein)
Parkview Intermediate School (Pasadena)
Tannahill Intermediate School (White Settlement)
Rockwall Independent School District
Tarrant County Juvenile Justice Program
Fossil Hill Middle School (Keller)
Lorena Alternative School
Parkhill Junior High (Richardson)
Union Bower Center for Learning (Irving)
Royse City Middle School (Texas)
Murphy Middle School (Plano)
Mabank Middle School
Miracles Program (San Antonio)
Miracles Program (Dallas)
Mansfield Select Athletics
Highland Park Middle School (Dallas)
Gainesville State School
Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Dallas
Boys and Girls Clubs of Fort Worth
Lena Pope Home (Fort Worth)
OL Slaton Middle School (Lubbock)
Dunbar Middle School (Lubbock)
Atkins Middle School (Lubbock)
Burnet Middle School (Burnet)

Virginia
Chesapeake Alternative School
Norfolk Christian (Norfolk)
Smith High School (Chesapeake)

Washington
McIlvaigh Middle School (Tacoma)
Kopachuck Middle School (Gig Harbor)
Harbor Ridge Middle School (Gig Harbor)

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you, Mr. Riach.

Ms. Walker?

STATEMENT OF SIRDEANER WALKER, MOTHER OF BULLIED CHILD, SCHOOL SAFETY ADVOCATE

Ms. WALKER. Good morning. I want to thank the distinguished members of Congress——

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Could you bring the mic a little bit closer to you?

Ms. WALKER. I want to thank the distinguished members of Congress here today for inviting me to speak at this important hearing.

My name is Sirdeaner Lynn Walker, and 4 months ago I would not have dreamed that one day I would be testifying on Capitol Hill.

I was an ordinary working mom, looking after my family and doing the best I could as a parent. But my life changed forever on April 6th, 2009. That night I was cooking dinner when my son, Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover, went to his room, where I imagined he would be doing his homework or playing his video games. Instead, I found him hanging by an extension cord tied around his knack. He was 11 years old.

Carl liked football and basketball and playing video games with his little brother. He loved the Lord, and he loved his family. What could make a child his age despair so much that he would take his own life? That question haunts me to this day, and I will probably never know the answer.

What we do know is that Carl was being bullied relentlessly at school. He had just started secondary school in September, and we had high hopes. But I knew something was wrong almost from the start. He didn't want to tell me what was bothering him, but I kept at him, and he finally told me.

The kids at school were pushing him around, calling him names, saying he acted gay, and calling him faggot. Hearing that, my heart just broke, and I was furious. So I called the school right away, and I told them about the situation. I expected they would be just as upset as I was, but instead they told me it was just an ordinary social interaction and that it would work itself out. I desperately wish they had been right, but it just got worse.

I did everything that a parent is supposed to do. I chose a good school. I joined the PTA. I went to every parent teacher conference. I called the school regularly, and I brought the bullying problem to the staff's attention. The school did not act. The teachers did not know how to respond.

After Carl died, I could have stayed home and mourned, but instead I have chosen to get involved, to speak out about school bullying. And I have learned in a short time that the most important thing I have learned is that bullying is not an inevitable part of growing up. It can be prevented, and there isn't a moment to lose.

Since my son died, I met the mother of another 11-year-old boy, who was also being seriously bullied and killed himself. And now I know that there are others. This has got to stop. School bullying is a national crisis, and we need a national solution to deal with it. That is why I am here today.

Educators need additional support and clear guidance about how to ensure that all our kids feel safe at school. Congress can make sure they have the guidance and support by making anti-bullying policies mandatory at all our nation's schools. Every school should have one, and we shouldn't rest until they do.

The Safe Schools Improvement Act would help achieve this goal, and it is supported by over 30 national education, health, religious and other organizations. I urge the subcommittees to move this legislation forward. We cannot afford to wait for another child to drop out of school, to struggle academically, or even worse, take his own life before we take this problem seriously.

Before I finish, I want to say one more thing. Very soon after Carl died, I heard from an organization called GLISTEN, which

stands for Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network. They were offering their sympathy and support, and it meant a lot to me to learn that I wasn't alone, that other families had gone through this. But I have to admit I at first was very nervous.

My son was only 11 years old. He didn't identify as gay or straight or anything like that. He was a child. Those kids at his school called him those names, because they were probably the most hurtful things they could think of to say, and they hit their mark.

So I didn't know what to expect when my contact with GLISTEN brought me together with a diverse group of students, some of whom had been victims of bullying. It was the National Day of Silence, a day that gets young people involved in raising awareness about bullying.

These were kids from a wide range of backgrounds. And what amazed me the most was how much common ground we had. We shared our stories, and it gave me hope and the courage to speak out on behalf of my son Carl.

I know that bullying is not a gay issue or a straight issue. It is a safety issue. It is about what kind of learning environment we want our children to have and how far we are willing to go to protect and teach them. That was the first day I started to believe you could do something about this problem. And believe it or not, that day would have been Carl's 12th birthday on April 17th.

I would like to think he rested just a little easier, knowing that all these brave young people are out there fighting for him and all the children like him.

So in closing, I want to thank you once again for the honor of this opportunity. I ask you to please do everything—everything—in your power to make sure that no other family has to go through what my family went through. Please help us to stop school bullying. Please help our children—all of our children—who are suffering in our schools today. Thank you very much.

[The statement of Ms. Walker follows:]

Prepared Statement of Sirdeaner Walker, Mother of Bullied Child, School Safety Advocate

Good morning. I want to thank the distinguished members of Congress here today for inviting me to speak and for holding this important hearing.

My name is Sirdeaner Walker, and four months ago, I would not have dreamed that one day I would be testifying on Capitol Hill. I was an ordinary working mom, looking after my family and doing the best I could as a parent.

But my life changed forever on April 6, 2009.

That was the night I was cooking dinner when my son, Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover, went to his room where I imagined he'd be doing his homework or playing his videogames. Instead, I found him hanging by an extension cord tied around his neck.

He was 11 years old.

Carl liked football and basketball and playing video games with his little brother. He loved the Lord and he loved his family. What could make a child his age despair so much that he would take his own life?

That question haunts me to this day, and I will probably never know the answer.

What we do know is that Carl was being bullied relentlessly at school. He had just started secondary school in September, and we had high hopes, but I knew something was wrong, almost from the start.

He didn't want to tell me what was bothering him, but I kept at him, and he finally told me that kids at school were pushing him around, calling him names, saying he acted "gay," and calling him "faggot."

Hearing that, my heart just broke for him. And I was furious. So I called the school right away and told them about the situation. I expected they would be just as upset as I was, but instead, they told me it was just ordinary social interaction that would work itself out.

I desperately wish they had been right. But it just got worse. By March, other kids were threatening to kill him.

I did everything that a parent is supposed to: I chose a "good" school; I joined the PTO; I went to every parent-teacher conference; I called the school regularly and brought the bullying problem to the staff's attention. And the school did not act. The teachers did not know how to respond.

After Carl died, I could have stayed at home and mourned him, but instead, I've chosen to get involved, to speak out about school bullying—and I have learned a lot in a short time.

And the most important thing I've learned is that bullying is not an inevitable part of growing up. It can be prevented. And there isn't a moment to lose.

Since my son died on April 6, I met the mother of another 11-year-old boy who was also being seriously bullied at school and killed himself. And I know there are others. This has got to stop.

School bullying is a national crisis, and we need a national solution to deal with it. That is why I am here today. Teachers, administrators and other school personnel need additional support and clear guidance about how to ensure that all kids feel safe in school. Congress can make sure they have that guidance and support by making anti-bullying policies mandatory at all or our nation's schools.

Policies that make it clear exactly what kind of behavior will not be tolerated. Policies that include training teachers and other school personnel to recognize bullying and harassment and enforce the rules with immediate, appropriate discipline. Policies that recognize that to prevent bullying, we have to teach young people to treat each other with respect.

Studies show that schools that have these policies also have fewer reported incidents of bullying, and that students generally feel safer. Every school should have one, and we shouldn't rest until they do. And when I say every school, I mean public schools and charter schools—any school that gets federal funding.

The Safe Schools Improvement Act would help achieve the goals I have outlined today and I urge the subcommittees to move this legislation forward. The bill is supported by over 30 education, health, religious and other organizations that formed the National Safe Schools Partnership to address this terrible problem. We cannot afford to wait for another child to drop out of school, struggle academically or even worse, take his own life before we take this problem seriously.

Before I finish, I want to say one more thing, because I think it's important.

Very soon after Carl died, I heard from someone at an organization called GLSEN, which stands for Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network. They were offering their sympathy and support and it meant a lot to me to learn that I wasn't alone, that other families had gone through this.

But I have to admit, I felt a little nervous. My son was only 11. He didn't identify as gay or as straight or anything like that. He was a child. Those kids at his school called him those names because they were probably the most hurtful things they could think of to say. And they hit their mark.

So, I didn't really know what to expect when my contact with GLSEN brought me together with a diverse group of students, some of whom had been the victims of bullying. It was the National Day of Silence, a day that gets young people involved in raising awareness about bullying. These were kids from a pretty wide range of backgrounds. And what amazed me the most was not how different we all were, but how much common ground we had. We shared our stories, and it gave me hope and the courage to speak out on behalf of my son, Carl.

I know now that bullying is not a gay issue, or a straight issue. It's a safety issue. It's about what kind of learning environments we want for our children and how far we're willing to go to protect and teach them.

That was the first day I started to believe we could do something about this problem. And believe it or not, that day would have been Carl's 12th birthday. I like to think he rested just a little easier, knowing that all these brave young people are out there fighting for him and all the children like him.

So in closing, I thank you once again for the honor of this opportunity, and I ask you to please do everything in your power to make sure that no other family has to go through what my family went through. Please help us to put a stop to school bullying.

Thank you.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you, Ms. Walker.

Ms. Tetsworth?

STATEMENT OF CASSADY TETSWORTH, NATIONAL SAVE YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD, STUDENT, NORTHWEST GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL

Ms. TETSWORTH. Chairwoman McCarthy, Chairman Kildee, and other members of this distinguished panel, it is my pleasure to speak to you today from a student perspective on safety enhancement to violence prevention.

My name is Cassady Tetsworth, and I will be a senior at Northwest Gilbert High School. This is my second year serving on the National Youth Advisory Board Of Students against Violence Everywhere. I will be 17 years old, and this is my sixth year of being involved in SAVE, and there will also be the president of my school's chapter.

I was drawn to SAVE because I can voice my opinions about how to stop youth violence. I remember my first year as a SAVE member in middle school and how it hooked me to help as my friends are being bullied and harassed. I thought it was amazing to see so many kids coming together for one cause.

The National Association of Students against Violence Everywhere, a public nonprofit peer-to-peer organization, is a student-initiated and student-led organization. SAVE is dedicated to providing students with the information and resources necessary to make a positive difference in safety efforts in schools and communities.

The National Association of SAVE serves as a national clearinghouse for SAVE materials, provides training and technical assistance, coordinates chapters across the country, sponsors the national youth summit, and works with students, counselors, teachers, administrators, law enforcement and community agencies to establish and maintain SAVE chapters.

SAVE's slogan is "Youth Voices, Grown-up Choices." SAVE's mission is to decrease the potential for violence in schools and communities by promoting meaningful student involvement, education and service opportunities and efforts to establish, support and grow SAVE chapters.

We want to actively involve students in their own safety. They were group of volunteers and resource for student members, SAVE chapters are growing and making a positive difference across the nation. SAVE is a unique and powerful approach to school safety, because it recognizes the role that students can take in making schools and communities safer by reducing bullying.

Because SAVE chapters are established and operated by students, they have the opportunity to spread the message of how to prevent and reduce bullying among their peers. Focusing on crime prevention, conflict management and service projects, SAVE students are providing positive peer influences in bullying and violence prevention efforts.

Recent evaluations reflect the successful efforts of SAVE students working to improve school connectedness, build respect and establish a safer physical environment, as well as decreasing harassment and bullying at their schools.

I am proud to be part of an organization that has been successfully implemented at Northwest Gilbert High School, as well as other urban, suburban and rural schools, juvenile justice facilities, colleges and community-based settings.

SAVE works because students like to fit in with the group by listening to and paying attention to what other kids do and say. SAVE allows kids to choose safe and healthy behaviors over unsafe and unhealthy behaviors, to use the power of positive peer influence.

This year my chapter did "Fall into SAVE" at our school's band competition. We set up a table with SAVE information for visitors to learn about our chapter and help recruit members. As a service project, we collected items to donate for troops, and we also sent letters to a battered women's home.

We were also in charge of ensuring a safe prom night for all students, so we had students sign a pledge saying they would not drink or participate in any crime or violent behaviors on prom night.

Also, every year my club has Grim Reaper Day. We each wear all black, and we each wear a shirt with a violent statistic on it. Each member of our club represents a victim to violence. This means students in our school can not only hear statistics, but see it.

The reason that our SAVE chapter makes a positive difference is that we emphasize the following SAVE goals. We engage, empower, educate and encourage. You can educate students by getting them involved and active. This makes them care more about the cause. This is evident in our school's SAVE rock-a-thon. Seeing others participate that wanted to make a difference make them want to make a difference also.

SAVE empowers youth with skills necessary to provide the service to their community and their school. My chapter role-plays possible bullying situations during our meetings. This way students can be better equipped as to what they should do if someone else is being bullied.

SAVE encourages positive peer influences. When students outside of SAVE see our members helping and being active in violence prevention, they are more apt to be curious and want to help. This can be seen through anything as simple as wearing our SAVE shirts or putting up posters around the school.

SAVE educate students about the effects and consequences of bullying and violence with presentations, role-playing and other activities. It also teaches safe activities for students, parents and the community.

Safety is enhanced when SAVE chapters exist in schools and communities. I recommend that a student involvement component, such as SAVE, be a part of every school's comprehensive safety plan. Students should be given a real voice in their own safety.

I also believe ways to obtain more accurate data on school crime, bullying and other violent incidents should be explored so that schools will have the information that is needed to plan for a safer environment for all students. Data is often outdated by the time it is ready to be used.

There also needs to be student input. The student voice should be heard. If you don't know what your real and perceived challenges are, how can you make successful plan to overcome them?

Finally, with your help, SAVE's vision for all students everywhere can be realized. Schools and communities will be safer and more secure, free of fear and bullying, and more conducive to learning as a result of students being actively involved in meaningful violence prevention efforts.

Thank you.

[The statement of Ms. Tetsworth follows:]

Prepared Statement of Cassady Tetsworth, National SAVE Youth Advisory Board Member, Student, Northwest Guilford High School

Chairwoman McCarthy, Chairman Kildee, and other members of this distinguished panel, it is my pleasure to speak to you today from a student perspective on strengthening school safety through bullying.

I am Cassady Tetsworth, a rising senior at Northwest Guilford High School in Greensboro, North Carolina. I am 17 years old and a returning member of the Youth Advisory Board of the National Association of Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE). Next year I will also serve as President of my school's SAVE chapter. I was drawn to SAVE because I can voice my opinions about how to stop youth violence. I remember my first year as a SAVE member in middle school and how it hooked me to help, as my friends were being bullied and harassed. I thought it was amazing to see so many kids coming together for a cause.

The National Association of Student's Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE), a public nonprofit, peer to peer organization, is a student-initiated and student-directed organization. SAVE is dedicated to providing students with the information and resources necessary to make a positive difference in safety efforts in schools and communities. The National Association of SAVE serves as the national clearinghouse for SAVE materials; provides training and technical assistance; coordinates chapters across the country; sponsors a national youth summit; and works with students, counselors, teachers, administrators, law-enforcement and community agencies to establish and maintain SAVE chapters.

SAVE's slogan is Youth Voices * * * Grown-up Choices!

SAVE's mission is to decrease the potential for violence and bullying in schools and communities by promoting meaningful student involvement, education, and service opportunities in efforts to establish, support and grow SAVE chapters. We want to actively involve students in their own safety.

Through a group of volunteers and resourceful student members, SAVE chapters are growing and making a positive difference across the nation. SAVE is a unique and powerful approach to school safety because it recognizes the role that young people can take in making schools and communities safer by reducing bullying. Because SAVE chapters are established and operated by students, they have the opportunity to spread the message of how to prevent and reduce bullying among their peers. Focusing on crime prevention, conflict management and service projects, SAVE students are providing positive peer influences in bullying and violence prevention efforts. Recent evaluations reflect the successful efforts of SAVE students working to improve school connectedness, build respect, and establish a safer physical environment, as well as decreasing harassment and bullying at their schools.

I am proud to be part of an organization that has been successfully implemented at Northwest Guilford High School, as well as other urban, suburban, and rural schools, juvenile justice facilities, colleges, and community-based settings. SAVE works because kids like to fit in with the group by listening to and paying attention to what other kids do and say. SAVE allows kids to choose safe and healthy behaviors over unsafe and unhealthy behaviors—to use the power of positive peer influences.

My chapter did "Fall into SAVE" at our school's band competition. We set up a table with SAVE information for visitors to learn about our chapter and help us recruit members. As a service project, we collected items to donate to our troops and also sent them letters. We were also in charge of ensuring a safe prom night for all students, so we had students sign a pledge saying that they would not drink or participate in any crime or violent behavior on Prom night (Example of the Power of Positive Peer Influence). We made shirts that show statistics of people being victims of violence. We dress in all black and each member of our chapter represents

someone who was a victim of violence. These projects focused on increasing interaction and appreciation between students, teachers, and other school personnel.

The reason that our SAVE chapter makes a positive difference is that we emphasize the following SAVE goals:

Engage, Empower, Encourage, and Educate

1. Engage

You can engage students by getting them involved and active. This makes them care more about the cause. This was evident in our school's SAVE Rock-A-Thon. Seeing other students that want to make a difference, made them want to make a difference also (positive peer influence).

2. Empower

SAVE empowers youth with skills necessary to provide service to their community and school. My chapter role-plays possible bullying situations during meetings—so students can be better equipped as to what they should do when someone else is being bullied.

3. Encourage

SAVE encourages positive peer influences. When students outside of SAVE see our members helping and being active in violence prevention, they are more apt to be curious and want to help. This can be seen through anything as simple as wearing our SAVE shirts or putting up posters.

4. Educate

SAVE educates students about the effects and consequences of bullying and violence with presentations, role-playing, and other activities. It also teaches safe activities for students, parents, and the community.

Safety is enhanced when SAVE chapters exist in schools and communities. I recommend that a student involvement component, such as SAVE, be a part of every school's comprehensive safety plan. Students should be given a real voice in safety.

I also believe ways to obtain more accurate data on school crime, bullying, and other violent incidents should be explored so that schools will have the information that is needed to plan for safer environments for all students. Data is often outdated by the time it is ready to be used. There also needs to be student input—the student voice—should be heard. If you don't know what your real and perceived challenges are, how can you make successful plans to overcome these challenges?

Does a feeling of safety help a student concentrate on schoolwork? Some may say no, but as a student, I feel that safety is one of the most important things. When a student feels safe, when tolerance overcomes bullying and harassment, and when there is respect in student-to-student, teacher-to-student, and adult-to-adult interactions, students don't have to worry about anything but their classes. I think our SAVE activities helped make our school safer.

Finally, with your help SAVE's vision for all students everywhere can be realized: Schools and communities will be safer and more secure, free of fear and bullying, and more conducive to learning as a result of students being actively involved in meaningful violence prevention efforts.

Thank you.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you.

Dr. Poland?

STATEMENT OF DR. SCOTT POLAND, PROFESSOR, COORDINATOR, OFFICE OF SUICIDE AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION, CENTER FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES, NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

Dr. POLAND. Thank you for the opportunity to talk today. I am here today as someone who works in the public schools as a school psychologist for 26 years.

Crisis prevention and intervention has been my highest priority, along with school safety, for my entire career. I have personally been invited to work in communities in the aftermath of school shootings. I have worked in the aftermath of nearly 100 youth suicides. And I believe strongly in prevention. I certainly know that

schools could do so much more to prevent youth suicides than they are currently doing.

But I am here today because I am very concerned about complacency on the part of some schools, in some school administrations, about school safety planning, and I want to share with you three examples.

A principal was very concerned about school safety. She implemented a number of initiatives, but she knew she needed information from her student center staff members. She went to the superintendent's office, shared with him an instrument called the School Safety Assessment and Resource Bank, which would survey staff and students and be able to pinpoint safety needs.

The superintendent looked over the documents and then said that if we were to survey our staff and students, and if we identify the problem, then we would be held accountable to do something about it. Therefore, permission was denied.

In many schools principals have said to me they would really like to put important lessons in classrooms about bullying prevention, learning to appreciate diversity, decision-making, responsibility, school safety, but the teachers often balk and say, "We don't have time for that. We have to teach the accountability for the state performance test."

The next example is a parent who called me this spring, a parent of a fifth grader. Her son saw a gun in Billy's backpack in the classroom. He repeatedly went to the classroom teacher to say, "Billy has a gun." The teacher kept basically discounting that. He said, "No, I mean it. Billy has a gun in class today." Finally, the teacher aloud said, "Billy, do you have a gun in your backpack?" Billy said, "Yes." And Billy was asked to bring the gun to the teacher.

I am sure everybody here can envision a fifth-grade boy carrying a loaded gun to a crowded classroom and handing it to the teacher. Then the teacher took everyone aside and said, "We don't want Billy to get in any trouble today. Please don't say anything to anyone."

Now, that certainly highlights the need for school safety planning and training in every single school in America every year. And the young man who reported that Billy had the gun—he obviously did the right thing, as I am sure every student who is here today would.

But you see, I know that most tragedies that involve young people, they should have been prevented. Somebody always knew about their homicidal and suicidal plans. And it is interesting to ask students themselves and to survey the literature to find out why don't they tell us? Why don't they look to the adults for help?

They say, "I didn't want to get involved. I didn't think it could happen. I feared retaliation. I have been conditioned not to tell," or "I don't trust the adults in my life to do the right thing."

School safety is really an inside job, and we need a commitment from the student body first, then from every faculty member, the parents and the community. It is very important not only that we keep every student safe, we want to make sure every student feels like somebody cares whether they come to school or not.

We need to build connections between students and all adults, and very importantly, their schools. And we need to take care of their social and emotional welfare and development. Those things are essential.

Congress has the authority to require the same scrutiny as school safety, the same documentation that you currently do for academic performance. And every school in this country needs a threat assessment team. That has been recommended at the highest levels and from some very prestigious organizations, yet few schools in America actually have that team.

That should involve an administrator, of course, a mental health professional—and school psychologists are very well trained in that issue—and law enforcement and teacher who knows the student in question.

What I have learned over my career is the wisest decisions in education are made by a team of people, and we need to build relationships with every student. That fourth "R"—it is not just reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic—that fourth "R" is relationship.

And I ask you simply when we measure something, we say to everyone it is important. And please make every school in this country document safety planning. Obviously, we need good data. There is a tremendous need. We have heard about some excellent programs today, and I think I speak for everyone here in saying, Ms. Walker, we are so sorry about the tragic loss of your son.

But we all need to work to make sure that we do something about bullying and they do something about suicide prevention. It is either the second or third leading cause of death for children in our country, depending on where you live.

Thank you for this opportunity.

[The statement of Dr. Poland follows:]

Prepared Statement of Scott Poland, Ed.D., Coordinator of the Office of Suicide and Violence Prevention, Center for Psychological Studies, Nova Southeastern University

My name is Scott Poland. I am a past president of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), and I currently serve as coordinator of the Office of Suicide and Violence Prevention at the Center for Psychological Studies at Nova Southeastern University in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. I worked as a school psychologist in the public schools for 26 years, serving as the Director of Psychological Services for one of the largest Texas school systems for 23 of those years. School safety and crisis intervention and prevention have been my highest professional priorities. I have authored or co-authored four books and numerous chapters and articles on the subject and have presented and talked with school personnel more than 1000 times about these topics in every state and many foreign countries.

NASP is a professional membership association of 25,000 school psychologists who promote educationally and psychologically healthy environments for all children and youth. The association has developed many publications on school climate and school violence prevention. It has also partnered with the National Association of Secondary Principals to create a series of articles on topics such as the following:

1. Preventing school violence: A plan for safe and engaging schools
2. Threat assessment: An essential component for a comprehensive safe school program
3. Making schools safer for minority youth
4. Addressing sexual harassment
5. Promoting positive school climates through positive behavioral support
6. Suicide prevention in schools

These articles and the NASP Position Statement on School Violence and many other relevant articles are available at *www.nasponline.org*.

In 1997, I helped establish the NASP National Emergency Assistance Team (NEAT) and have served on the team continuously since its inception. Members of

the team have provided on-site or consultative assistance to school communities on many occasions in response to school violence, natural disasters, and other tragedies that impacted schools. NEAT members also realized the need for more training on school crisis prevention, response, and recovery, so NASP developed a research-based crisis prevention and intervention curriculum to build the capacity of the whole school community. The name of the curriculum is PREPaRE, which stands for prevent, reaffirm, evaluate, provide and respond, and examine—PREPaRE,

I have personally led or served on crisis teams called into the aftermath of 11 school shootings, including providing intervention after the tragedies in Paducah, Kentucky; Jonesboro, Arkansas; Littleton, Colorado; and Red Lake, Minnesota. I have also provided consultation to other school communities after acts of violence including suicides of teachers and students, providing direct on-site assistance to five school communities that experienced suicide contagion and suicide clusters. I have seen the pain, shock, and confusion in these communities and their search for answers but also know that the answers are quite complex and involve many societal issues. I identified these issues in my testimony before Congress on school violence in 1999 and 2000. I also discussed contributing factors such as gun availability, the influence of media violence (especially video games), lack of parental supervision, the failure of youth to understand the finality of death, lack of positive connections to school and adults, and the impact of school bullying. I also had the opportunity in 2001 to moderate the session on bullying prevention for the Children's Caucus of Congress.

The purpose of my testimony is to provide guidance to help strengthen school safety and ensure that all schools are nurturing environments for all students to learn. Students who feel threatened and harassed can not learn at an optimal level. It is our responsibility to make sure that every child feels safe at school and to implement suicide prevention programs. Although statistics reveal schools to be much safer places for children than their communities, even one violent death in a school in our country is unacceptable. Of great concern is the harassment and bullying that occurs in schools. For example, a study from the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) found that 65% of high school students had been bullied in the past year.

As a school psychologist, students were often referred to me who were bullied at school. I would ask them if they had notified their teacher about what was happening and a very common response was that the victim had notified the teacher but was often told to stay away from the students who were doing the bullying. This advice fails to address the need to provide consequences for the bully and to recognize that it is difficult to avoid the bully who rides your bus and is in your classes. We need to be especially concerned about the harassment and bullying that occurs at schools for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students with surveys revealing that as many as nine in 10 have been bullied (see *www.GLSEN.org*). These students are at risk for increased suicidal thoughts and actions as a new term emerges: "bullicide." Grieving parents are attempting to hold the schools legally accountable for failure to stop the bullying believed to have greatly contributed to the suicides of their children. The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey, completed most recently in 2007 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, found that 6.9% of high school students surveyed had made a suicide attempt in the past year. Few school systems have the needed procedures and policies in place for suicide prevention and intervention, and the American Association of Suicidology (AAS) has recently developed a School Suicide Accreditation Program to raise the standards, competency, and confidence of school personnel for prevention and intervention. More information about the accreditation program is available at *www.suicidology.org*.

In addition, NASP recently released the NASP President's Call to Action to Prevent Youth Suicide which is available at *http://www.nasponline.org/advocacy/suicidecalltoaction.aspx*. In this call to action, it is emphasized that few if any problems confronting our nation's schools are more urgent than youth suicidal behavior. Youth suicide continues to be a significant public health problem at a national level. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide is the third-leading cause of death among young people in the United States, trailing only accidents and homicide. In the last decade, more teenagers and young adults died from suicide than from cancer, birth defects, AIDS, stroke, pneumonia, influenza and chronic lung disease combined. An alarming fact is that every five hours a child or adolescent in the United States dies as a result of suicide. Consequently, suicide prevention and intervention must be part of any comprehensive violence prevention effort.

In the years immediately following the Columbine tragedy, there were many excellent initiatives at both the state and federal levels to make schools safer. Vir-

tually every school in the country devoted resources and time to safety planning. To assist schools in their efforts, NASP co-authored Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools, which was produced jointly by the Departments of Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services. The Department of Education and the Secret Service also released two reports on the study of targeted school violence and the FBI released a publication on school violence and school safety. Post-Columbine, most schools created safety task forces that were very active for a year or two, but that have now become inactive or nonexistent. School principals are intensely questioned and evaluated only based on the academic test scores for their school, and it is clear that the same scrutiny and accountability must be implemented for school safety. School leaders must make school safety a priority, including it in policies and procedures as a continuum of services that build on positive discipline and school climate. Each campus must also have crisis prevention and response team and a plan in which all community members know the part they play.

An important component missing from much of the initial planning and continuing to today is the absence of efforts to get students involved in their own safety. School safety is an "inside job" that requires a commitment from the students first, then from the staff, parents, and the community. Students are almost always aware of the homicidal and suicidal statements of fellow students and they certainly are aware of bullying. The commitment from students can be obtained by having them sign safety pledges that stress the importance of immediately reporting a weapon on campus to the nearest adult and of letting an adult determine the seriousness of a violent threat. One of the best strategies to reduce bullying is to reach the bystanders who laugh and thereby reinforce the bully's behavior. Most school violence could be prevented through building better relationships with students and teaching them when to get adult help.

In an article for the National School Board Journal, The 4th R-Relationships, I stressed that safety, security, and belonging are as important as reading, writing, and arithmetic! Students also know what part of the school building is unsafe and what times of the day there is a lack of supervision. Classroom discussions and review of the floor plan for the school can pinpoint areas of concern.

I will never forget being in a classroom the day after a school shooting and thinking that things were going as well as could be expected with the classroom discussion until several students said, "That was so serious and I could have been killed. It could have been me that was shot but I still don't think I would tell an adult if I saw a gun on campus tomorrow." Not one student in the classroom disagreed publicly with that thinking. The teacher, counselor, assistant principal, and I could not convince students of the need to tell the nearest adult.

The literature says that students do not look to adults for help because of these reasons:

1. They fear retaliation;
2. They do not believe anything will happen;
3. They have been conditioned not to tell;
4. They do not trust adults; and
5. They do not want to get involved

We have done a very poor job in our society of teaching our youth how to separate incessant tattling about inconsequential things from the need to tell when someone may be harmed. We must begin to teach children at an early age through curriculum programs at every grade level that if they are feeling unsafe—and especially if someone is talking about homicide or suicide—they must get adult help right away. I have had the chance to ask many educators, "At what age does it start that kids won't tell adults about serious situations such as a gun being on campus?" The answer that I most often hear is that between third and fifth grades a major portion of children stop looking to adults for help.

In order to strengthen school safety, it is very important for all school staff to know their students and know them well. Every staff member needs to build positive relationships with all students and be alert for signs of violence. We must ensure that all children and adolescents know where to get adult help and that they have been taught that they are an essential key to maintaining a safe environment. This is an ambitious goal because ending the "conspiracy of silence" will involve much discussion in schools, places of worship, community programs, and our families.

There has been much complacency in recent years; strengthening school safety needs to be a priority. It is clear that there is no lack of resources. Best practices for crisis prevention and school safety have been developed and widely disseminated; there is no need to recreate the wheel! The real issue is whether or not all schools are taking seriously their responsibility to ensure school safety and to create

a climate where no child feels threatened or harassed. In this regard, a critical area to be addressed is the need for threat assessment teams. Too often, it comes out that one or more educators admit that they knew the student who threatened violence but felt there was nothing to worry about. Another worrisome extreme is when a student who appears to make a threat is swiftly and severely punished and receives harsh consequences such as expulsion, with very little investigation.

NASP cites data indicating that zero tolerance policies have contributed to juvenile justice facilities holding youth with mental health difficulties who have committed only minor offenses instead of getting them the help they urgently need. My experience has been that the wisest decisions are made by a team and in fact all of the reports and publications cited above recommend that every school create a threat assessment team composed of the following: a teacher who knows the student in question, a school administrator, a mental health professional such as a school psychologist, and a law enforcement representative. A threat assessment team would carefully gather information by interviewing the student who reportedly made the threat, the recipient of the threat, and any witnesses that might have been present. All school records would be reviewed for the student in question. Threats would be classified into two types with the first type being "transient" and the second being "substantial." An example of a transient threat is something said in the heat of the moment that involves no planning, no means, and that is not the result of a long-standing grudge or feud. While all threats should be taken seriously and investigated, substantial threats that do involve planning, a grudge, and a means to carry them out should receive more intensive interventions and if necessary severe consequences such as suspension and expulsion. There is considerable controversy about the zero tolerance policies that have resulted in some schools being quick to expel students with little information about the incident. Unfortunately, sometimes the students who are expelled are quite young Also, there is no guarantee that youngsters who have been suspended or expelled won't come back to school and commit violent acts. In fact, some have.

The following are a few recent examples that highlight the need for prioritization and on-going planning and training for all staff on school safety:

• The school principal had several programs in place to address school safety but wanted to survey students and teachers to pinpoint other areas for school safety improvement. He decided to use the School Safety Assessment and Resource Bank (SSARB), developed by researchers at the University of Montana. The SSARB targets 32 key areas of school safety and climate and helps schools meet NCLB expectations for anonymous assessment of school safety by staff and students. (More information is available at *www.ssarb.com*.) The principal carefully reviewed the instrument and then went to the superintendent's office for approval to utilize the survey. The principal knew the researchers and told the superintendent that he had been offered the opportunity to have his school utilize the SSARB at no charge. The superintendent denied permission, commenting that if the survey of staff and students identified a problem the school would be held accountable to do something about it.

• In the spring of 2009, a parent of a fifth grader described the following scenario and expressed much frustration with her child's teacher and school. Her son knew that his classmate Billy had a gun in his backpack, and he tried repeatedly to get the teacher's attention for her action. The teacher told him to do his work and that Billy did not have a gun, but finally the teacher asked Billy aloud if he in fact had a gun in his backpack. Billy responded that he did have a gun in his backpack and then the teacher told Billy to bring the gun to the teacher. The teacher then told the entire class to keep quiet about the fact that Billy brought a gun to school so that Billy would not get in trouble.

• Nova Southeastern University (NSU), where I work, recently hosted two major events on school safety and bullying. NSU is located in Broward County, Florida, and three of the top 10 largest school systems in the nation are in South Florida (Dade, Palm Beach and Broward). NSU sponsored the International Bullying Prevention Conference (*www.stopbullyingworld.org*), with participants from all around the world. As one of the keynote speakers, I asked the participants how many were from South Florida and noted that almost no one locally was in attendance even though many thousands of educators are within about an hour's drive from the campus. NSU also hosted a school safety summit and invited educators from all three large county school systems mentioned above. One of the keynote speakers was Ron Stephens, the Director of the National Schools Safety Center, who is widely respected for his school safety expertise. Yet, his audience was quite small and mostly made up of university personnel.

• One principal said that she tried to set aside 30 minutes every day to work on problem solving, violence prevention, anger management, increased sense of belong-

ing, and learning to appreciate everyone regardless of race and ethnicity, in all classrooms. However, many of the teachers refused to participate because of the pressure they felt to teach for success on the state academic accountability test.

• An administrator of a high school of 4,000 students implemented several safety initiatives, following the best practices indicated throughout the literature and in face-to-face training. Students, staff, and parents were an integral part of the process and many of the committees, intervention techniques, and relationship building venues were a result of collaborative effort. The administrator moved to another campus but returned for an evening event some months later and encountered a student who was her most avid safety council member. In great distress, he asked, "What happened to our safety council?" Her reply added to his distress. "It's dead, and our CPR (Concerned Person's Report) box is gone. Nobody cares here anymore!"

I have highlighted several examples of questionable school responses and lack of commitment to school safety whether resulting from poor judgment, mistaken priorities, or too few resources. Yet, please understand that that many of these responses are both expected and rational due to the emphasis on standardized high stakes tests.

Unfortunately, they are unaware of the considerable research by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) that shows that by incorporating universal social-emotional curriculums into schools that academic learning can be significantly increased. In addition, by using these curriculums school bonding, positive pro-social behavior, social emotional increased while disciplinary problems were greatly reduced. Therefore, we do not have to choose between social-emotional/character education and academic learning. Instead we now know that by increasing the social-emotional skills of our nation's youth, we actually boost their academic success as well as improve other important variables necessary for a positive school climate. This is extraordinary finding. (More information is available at *www.casel.org*)

I would now like to highlight the following very positive school safety approaches among the many that are being implemented around the country:

• The Volusia County Schools in Florida had threats of violence and made it a priority to create threat assessment procedures, working cooperatively with county resources in mental health and law enforcement to improve school safety. The superintendent focused her beginning-of-school administrative conference on school safety and the lead school psychologist and security personnel worked with local and school resources to develop threat assessment procedures and provide training for administrative and support personnel. School safety procedures and the role that everyone and especially students play in safety are critical components of the program, which is in place at every school. Student safety pledges are now utilized. More information is available at *www.volusia.k12.fl.us.*

• In recent years, many states such as Iowa, Maryland, and most recently, North Carolina, have passed laws prohibiting bullying and harassment in schools and requiring enumerated (e.g., including students' sexual orientation and gender identity, among other groups) anti-bullying and harassment policies and reporting procedures for schools. HR 2262, The Safe Schools Improvement Act, would enact similar requirements at the national level. In many cases, it is the family members of bullied students who have committed suicide who lead efforts to pass laws prohibiting bullying and harassment.

• The Papillion-La Vista schools in Nebraska realized that in Sarpy County, Nebraska, nine teens had died by suicide in a 26-month period. The system organized a county-wide task force including mayors and civic leaders of the several small towns in the county and representatives from each school system in the county. The task force met repeatedly and included law enforcement and mental health personnel and implemented best practices suicide prevention programs for youth. More information about the work of the task force is available at *www.paplv.esu.org.*

• PSI, a private Ohio mental health education services firm, trains students, teachers and parents throughout Ohio to manage bullying by building student leadership skills. The program emphasizes individual responsibility and competent decision making by students. PSI programs have won the Ohio BEST Practices Award. More information is available at *www.psi-solutions.org.*

It is an honor to have the opportunity to provide testimony on strengthening school safety. This is a subject that is very dear to my heart, as I have seen the affects of school violence first hand many times and am very dedicated to prevention. Nova Southeastern University, where I now work, has made prevention and safety a high priority, and goals have been set for every staff member and student to learn the warning signs of violence and suicide and to understand that safety and prevention are everyone's responsibility. Our Office of Suicide and Violence Prevention provides training to all staff and students that also includes sources of assist-

ance for troubled students and staff. More information is available at SVP@nova.edu.

It is essential for school safety to become a priority in every school, and the best evidence-based practices need to be implemented to ensure the safety of all students. This will only happen when every school board, superintendent, and state and national entity requires the same accountability for school safety that we currently require for academic performance. In the near future, Congress will be asked to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and it is imperative that stronger requirements be in place for school safety and more emphasis placed on the social and emotional well being of children. School psychologists are the highest trained mental health professionals working in schools, and they are well trained in school safety, threat assessment, bullying prevention, and suicide prevention. Thus, they must be included as an important team member working on these issues in every school.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you, Dr. Poland.

And I want to thank all the witnesses.

And yes, our heart does go out to Ms. Walker for her loss of her son. And the only thing I would say to her is that at one time many years ago I sat where you are to testify, and that is why I am sitting here today, because I also said, "I am going to make something happen." And so you being here is a very important step for you, so I thank you for the work that you are doing.

What was said as far as all the testimony that we have heard, obviously, you know, we had terrific programs out there. We have to make sure that they are incorporated, but we can always do more. You always have to be able to do more.

And the whole idea of having a committee hearing like this is not only to hear from the witnesses, but also for the members of Congress to hear from the witnesses. And I think that is extremely important, as we go forward and try to do legislation, to work with our young people.

As I said right from the beginning, if our young people are not involved in the decisions that we are making, and if they are not involved in letting us know what is going on in their schools and certainly in their lives, we could do all the legislation in the world. It is not going to mean anything. So we have to give the young people in the teachers the support that they need. And I think that is extremely important.

Dr. Poland, I am going to ask a question, because in your testimony you discussed how zero-tolerance policies in schools can contribute to students finding themselves in the pipeline to actually go to prison.

Dr. POLAND. Well, it is very important, of course, that we have a thorough investigation of an incident so that we don't move quickly to harsh and severe consequences.

Threats of violence tend to fall into two categories: transient, which are fleeting, which are made in a moment of passion, and substantial, which involve a long-standing grudge, planning, and the use of a weapon. And we need to make certain that not every threat receives exactly the same consequence.

And I am also a fan for intervention and psychological help. We have determined, for example, that many of the school shooters had serious psychological problems, and we need to figure out how we can really ensure that every young person gets the intervention and the mental health treatment that they need.

And simply putting them out of school is not the answer. In fact, some of them actually have returned to their schools, after being suspended and expelled, and committed acts of violence. So we must have law enforcement, mental health and school officials all working together to provide intervention to make a difference in the lives of a troubled child.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. I agree with you.

And Mr. Trump, your testimony placed a strong emphasis on collecting the data. I have become a real champion of data. What we have been doing over the last several years and the information we have gotten from that data has been amazing. But could you tell us why it makes—you know, collecting the data that we need could make our schools safer?

Mr. TRUMP. Absolutely. And we appreciate your championing that. I look back in my career. I never thought I was going to be championing data in Congress, because a lot of times people think there are much more exciting things to talk about to the TV mentality of violence.

But if we can't identify the problem, if we don't have accurate data that is based not only on surveys, and which are important; I think we need to continue those, and I think you heard from the testimony here the importance of student input, student surveys, and we need to support that with incident-based data, especially at the federal level.

We can't say schools crime is down or up if we don't actually know what incidents are occurring. So data is important, first of all, to identify the problem; secondly, to be able to speak on trends; and most of all, unique data to develop prevention and intervention programs.

If we can't identify the problem, we are not going to be able to develop meaningful programs to intervene and stop negative trends and to develop preventive, proactive things to prevent them in the first place. And right now our data is faulty.

It is a difficult task, but as you proposed in the SAVE Act, we can do better. We say we can't change the climate if we don't change the conversation, and we need to change the conversation from a survey-only data to an incident-based data so that we can be more proactive.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. I agree with that. I know that even when we had brought it up, even with some of the language that we have in our bill on the law enforcement data or the FBI data, you know, antennas went up. You know, people were very nervous about that.

Well, I think about how data will allow the young person to get the help that they need, I mean think about it. I watched my grandchildren, you know, when they were in preschool, and I saw bullying going on. And it was accepted in preschool. "Oh, well, they are just playing around." Well, you know, it is wrong.

Mr. TRUMP. It is easier, Congresswoman, to address Dr. Poland's statement about complacency. It is very easy to be complacent if they don't identify the problem. And so it is easier to say we won't collect data, as he alluded to with a specific example. If we don't have the data, we don't have a problem. Well, that is not necessarily true. We may have a problem.

And unfortunately, we have seen those school administrators, who acknowledge problems, who document it, who document their incidents, who document the problems, who call the police when they need to, oftentimes they have higher numbers and statistics at their school than the school down the street. And people perceive that school with the higher numbers to be a problem, when in reality it may be a safer school, because they are dealing with the problem.

So with the surveys, I just use the analogy it would like going to our local mall on a Friday night and surveying 5,000 people and 4,995 said they have never been a victim of crime, so on Monday we eliminate all the police and crime prevention in our community. It wouldn't make sense.

We need the surveys, but we also need real data.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. And I think it is important, too, as we go forward. And I see my time is up

And I want to thank the young people for being here today really, because you are going to be a large part on what we are going to do in the future to make not only for yourselves, but for the future generations, because if we don't take care of our children for the future, this country is not going to be where it should be.

Mr. Platts?

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

First, Ms. Walker, I want to sincerely thank you for your presence here today and taking a tremendous personal tragedy and working to make it a true public good. And they are efforts here today, and clearly beyond today, your son Carl will be honored and long remembered because of the good that will come from your efforts in tribute to him. So thank you for your testimony.

Ms. WALKER. Thank you.

Mr. PLATTS. Ms. Kaufmann, one of the issues you mentioned in talking about developing your character education program and the interaction with parents, and I was wondering if you could expand on that—in one and looking at myself, I give great credit first to my mom and dad and the upbringing they gave five of us children. How they did it and stayed sane I am not sure, but—although if my mom was here, she may say she didn't.

But I saw my teachers as complementing the character education that I got at home. My third grade teacher, who is now 98, Mrs. Mertz, you know, it was part of kind of just everyday routine of school in reinforcing those values that were taught at home.

How have parents at Hannah Penn and now at York City—or William Penn responded, and how are they engaged to make sure it is a partnership?

Ms. KAUFMANN. I can tell you at Hannah Penn they have engaged the parents in evening events. They have expanded to let us show you how to help your child with homework, math and reading, to how to help your child become a better person and a more responsible citizen. And I know they have those monthly, and the turnout has escalated. So I know that that is continuing there.

And part of any program is the staff and staffing, making connections with community, being a part of the community, being visible in the community, attending faith-based organizational meetings, going to local agencies in making those kinds of partner-

ships so that parents in the community feel connected to the school when they are part of their community events. So I know that is continuing to go on there.

At the high school, it is kind of a new initiative there. We have rolled it out. In January we opened our character education rooms, so there are plans going forward with the staff to do pretty much the same thing, to start opening our school after hours and making opportunities for parents to engage not just with the character portion of our programming, but with technology and with other initiatives that are going on in the school, because, you know, we all know that it takes a village to raise a child.

And the more that you can welcome parents and the community into the school, the school becomes a part of the community, and the kids don't believe it is 3:00 or 3:30 and not come back, if the doors are open and they are swinging both ways all the time.

Mr. PLATTS. Your initiative, first at the middle school and now expanding it to the high school, do you see age level or grade level where we should, you know, try to eventually get to? Is it not just down in the middle school, but in fourth grade, third grade, in the sense of the earlier the better, it would seem, before wrongful character attributes are developed, that we reinforce the positive?

In your experience do you see the importance of moving down to the elementary level? And is York City—I know there is a financial aspect to this. Is that something that you are considering?

Ms. KAUFMANN. Absolutely. I agree with the Andrews women here. I believe that elementary school—actually, honestly, the parent. I believe this begins at home. It begins before your child ever interacts with another child, that there are basic beliefs that you have that you share with your child about personal integrity and respect for other people and responsibility.

So the sooner you can engage children in these kinds of discussions and teach these core traits and values, the better. I do think that York City will expand it as money is available for that.

But that commitment has been to continue it at the secondary buildings, because there has been such success there from the violence perspective. And the violence in our district has been more rampant historically at the secondary buildings. But absolutely, I think there is a call for it at the younger grade levels.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you. If I could maybe squeeze one last question in to Ms. Andrews. Ms. Andrews and Dr. Poland, both of your testimonies, or all three of your testimonies touch on the issue of bystanders and the important role that they play in this.

And before I ask the question, I want to first say that to Rob's daughters that it is an honor to serve with your dad and been a great pleasure, and he is certainly a great champion of a lot of issues, and especially issues related to education, so delighted to have his family here with us.

But in your testimony, in your written testimony and your testimony here today talking about bystanders, and what, from a student perspective and then a professional someone in the field, what is, do you think, the number one thing we could do to encourage children to stand up and be engaged, and specifically the child? I realize the teacher and principals, everybody plays a role, but espe-

cially for our students, what is the number one thing we could do to encourage the importance of them standing up?

And I will start with the students and then come to Dr. Poland.

Ms. JOSIE ANDREWS. There we go. I think that what would really encourage kids to stand up is other kids and a program based off kids to encourage peers, because I think in this situation with Ms. Walker's son, I think if two boys play basketball with him after school and ate lunch with him and said to the bullies, "Don't say that about him," maybe things would have been different.

And I think it is the other kids who make the difference. And if even one kid stands up and tells their friends, "Why don't you say something with me," I think it is the kids who could make the difference for the kids, not these——

Some of the programs from the adults just aren't realistic, and they seem to be kind of—they look at the kids as if they are—they don't understand as much as they really do. And they go through unrealistic things. And I think if they heard it from other kids, it would be so much more relatable and so much more real.

Ms. JACQUELYN ANDREWS. I think it is the programs are not focusing on the right types of people. They are focusing more on the bully or the victim. We are seeing that the victim—sometimes they are saying the victim should stand up for what they believe in, but the reason why the victim is that the victim is because they can't stand up for themselves.

And sometimes—and most of the times the bully doesn't know what they are doing is wrong, and that is why they are bullying. Not everyone wants to do something wrong or be a bad person. They just don't realize what they are doing is wrong. They might think it is funny to throw a pie at someone, because they have had a pie thrown at them, and they thought it was funny. They don't always know that what they are doing is wrong.

So instead it is really what we said, if it is the bystanders, the 99.9 percent of the people who just stand there and watch it happen, whether they don't want to be the victim themselves or they just don't have the courage to stand up.

But we are the people who can make the difference, and if so these programs that focus on children knowing that they can stand up and have their own voice and make a difference, then things will change around, we believe.

And that is why these programs—and they are not just programs that say do this, do that. You actually read stories about children who have been victims. There are millions and millions of stories and programs online that you can read about real experiences. And if we just had programs that based more with the children and in an environment to which they can learn it about, then we could make a difference.

Dr. POLAND. Thank you. I would like to stress the roles that the adults do play. As a school psychologist, I was always referred a student with a problem. I hear a long litany of everything they are doing wrong, and I would like to ask the teacher or the staff member, "What do they want to be when they grow up? Do you know if they have a pet at home? What do they do with their free time?"

Almost never could they answer those questions. It is about building those relationships. I would get referred the person that

was being bullied in the school. I would always ask where the bullying was happening. I would ask, "Did you tell one of the adults about it?" Most of the time they said yes. "Well, what did the adult tell you?" "They told me stay away from those boys."

That is pretty hard to do if they are in your classroom and ride your bus every single day. And if a single teacher in America walks down the hall and pretends that they don't see the bullying going on, their very inactivity has condoned the behavior.

The good news is most kids do not bully, but they certainly do stand around, and they laugh and reinforce the bully. Consequences for the bully, support for the victim and schoolwide programs to help everyone pledged to do something about it, because it can be stopped.

Thank you.

Mr. PLATTS. Madam Chair, just a quick follow up there.

If I take that, Dr. Poland, it is in trying to help ensure that the child, the student stands up, it is making sure that the professional, the teacher, or whoever, in the school setting is reinforcing that importance, you know, that, you know, the right, you know, rightfulness of doing that.

Dr. POLAND. Absolutely. And one of my favorite quotes is, "What we do speaks so loudly to our children, when we tried to talk to them they cannot hear us. They have been watching us."

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Well, Mr. Kildee, our chairman of Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education?

Mr. KILDEE. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I don't want to broaden the agenda of this hearing too far, but, Mr. Trump, can you address a possible relationship between school violence and bullying with a general degradation of civility in our society? Can programs in schools help diminish those antisocial activities in society?

You know, when I first entered politics 44 years ago, and 33 years ago in Congress, there was a higher degree of civility. While this committee is an example of good civility, there has been a degradation in the Congress, too.

Then you have the Limbaughs and the O'Reillys. I might get mentioned in their program negatively, but there is a degradation of civility. Does that seep into the schools and affect the conduct of the students? And can programs in the schools make all people a little more concerned about other people's feelings and rights?

Mr. TRUMP. Absolutely, Mr. Chairman. I see it several places. First of all, we have dealt with more incidents in the last few years when we are called into school districts that one of the first things they are actually telling us about is the behavior problems they are having with a select number of parents.

We were in a school district at the beginning of last school year in October that had three incidents in their school where police had to be called and parents—one where a parent dragged another parent out of a car and started beating the parent in the parking lot at dismissal, because that person allegedly cut in front of the other.

We have a fast food society, the me generation, where people can't walk down the street without text messaging and walking

into somebody. I said I must be aging the debate here at age 45, because I am starting to really get fed up with that me, me, me.

And I asked my wife one day. I said, "Is it me? Am I getting older?" She said, "Yes, you are, dear." But I said, "What is the problem?" And she said, "People don't have room to recognize that there are others in the world, because they are too consumed with me, myself and I." So we are dealing with that piece.

The second piece is we are dealing—the second piece that we are dealing with—so there is—we are seeing the spillover of the parents and the community and at the school. The second part is it is hard to separate school violence and community violence in many cases. Things that start in the school spill over into the neighborhood, but we also see what is going on in the neighborhood spill over to the schools.

A number of our larger urban districts today in particular, we are seeing community gang activity in rival neighborhoods spill over. Obviously, in your great state of Michigan, Detroit has had a number of incidents in their schools with a shooting just recently of seven teens at a bus stop outside of a summer school. We have seen this across the country in a number of districts.

So there has to be recognition of what—not—what happens in the community and the down fighting of behavior and adult behavior in the community is going to impact our kids.

I think that we also have, from a safety perspective, it means tighter partnerships between schools, police, mental health agencies and the community partners, because there is an interrelationship of both the causes, and that is the only way we are going to successfully deal with the problem as well.

But the civility is declining. I see it personally as well as professionally, and we see it related to school safety and violence, and it is one of the reasons we stress the importance of having comprehensive safe school programs, because it has to be prevention, preparedness, security, but it also has to be community partnerships and reaching outside of the school walls to work with parents, students, first responders, mental health agencies and others.

So I think it is absolutely related, and we are going to have to approach it that way, and that is the stress on comprehensive approach.

Mr. KILDEE. You know, one role of our schools is to educate people to be doctors and to be engineers. But I also think there is a second role where the school can educate people to be civil people.

I like the programs that have been talked about here this morning, where students are involved, because peer-to-peer really can make a difference. When your peer says, "Hey, that is not nice" or, "Be nice," sometimes that is more effective than what a teacher can do to prevent a conflict. Your response to that?

Ms. JACQUELYN ANDREWS. I just think I completely agree. The difference between—if you write a story that some adult wrote, who is in their mid-40s, about some kind of bullying problem versus—and telling, you know, some message about don't bully, versus a kid who actually experienced it, it is much more effective to see, "Wow, someone else is going through exactly what I have just experienced." I mean it is much more effective, and I completely agree.

Ms. JOSIE ANDREWS. And I also want to say bullying is a problem, because people worry about what people think of them. And if people worry about what people think of them in a positive way, or if someone says, "Be nice," then you are all of a sudden thinking, "No one thinks I am nice." That makes just as big of an effect.

Mr. KILDEE. Thank you.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you.

Now we will hear from Mr. Castle. Welcome.

And Mr. Castle is the ranking member on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education and a great supporter of all the things that we do on this committee and the full committee.

Mr. Castle?

Mr. CASTLE. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

And let me thank all the witnesses here. I unfortunately, because of another appointment, had to miss some of your testimony, but I have read a good part of it, and I congratulate you, particularly the young people. I don't think at your age I would have wanted to come testify before Congress. You did a great job.

Dr. Poland, I have sort of a maybe a multi-part question here, but one of them is a follow up to the question Mr. Platts asked Ms. Kaufmann. And that is the age at which this should start. I did hear your testimony, and you talked about various programs and the complacency and that kind of thing.

And as a professional I would be interested in your views as to the problems may obviously show themselves in high school or at a middle school or high school or something of that nature, which is all these programs start at an earlier age?

I have got several parts to this question. The second part is, as we get ready to reauthorize No Child Left Behind, it may take a different form, but it is the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and probably may not happen until next year.

But as we do that, are there things that we should be considering in that legislation that would help with the various safety and bullying and other issues that we are talking about here today?

In my last part of this is in your background and looking at all this, your view of outside influences with respect to all of this—that is, violence in schools, the media and what they show, the use of the Internet.

For example, we have heard about other students, and I agree wholeheartedly with the students who are here that that is an important influence, but that whole sort of outside of the school aspect to dealing with the issues of safety and bullying and violence, et cetera?

Dr. POLAND. Thank you very much. First of all, I am concerned about the media influence on children. One of my favorite things to do is to talk to parents and to say, "Stop letting technology steal your child." We really should have our children's lives revolve around the family, and the real full value meal in America is around the family table for dinner.

And I would like to see those computers, for example, in the family room around the kitchen counter. And we need to be aware that our children are being exposed to violence and some of the highest

levels in our history to violent video games, through television, through movies.

And we can say no, which is one of the other things I always like to remind parents. You are in charge. You control a lot of things your children watch.

Secondly, you talked about the need for programs at an early level. And frankly, I see our elementary schools as warm, caring, sensitive places. But as we move into those much larger and sometimes nasty secondary schools, a lot of children get lost.

They have staff members that do not know their names. I had children—in fact, my own child—say to me, "It really bothers me that my high school teacher doesn't know my name, or sometimes she confuses me with other children."

And since I believe she is the most wonderful girl who ever lived, that is very frustrating. And I hope every parent here believes that about their sons and daughters.

And really, we must begin at the elementary level, but we have to keep that close communication between children and the adults in their lives up all the way through adulthood.

Somewhere around third and fifth grade is where some kids stopped looking to adults for help, and we need to ensure that that continues, where we have close programs where kids feel connected to schools and to the adults in every schools throughout the middle school years and throughout the high school years.

And actually as parents, children face the most life-threatening decision not in fourth grade—in 10th grade and 12th grade, decisions they make about who they hang out with, whether they use drugs, whether they get in a car with someone under the influence. So it is very important that parents stay very involved in their children's lives throughout education.

And when I talked to parents of a 4-year-old, they all come to the school meeting. And what I say to the parents of a 4-year-old is, "Promise me when your kid is in the 10th grade, you will be at every single thing that the school offers."

Now, I think you actually asked me three questions, sir. One is about the age the programs began. You asked me about the media. But I am not sure I commented on the middle question that you referred to.

Mr. CASTLE. No Child Left Behind—anything we should be doing specifically in Congress.

Dr. POLAND. Thank you. I believe we have an excellent opportunity to put the social and emotional well-being of children first in No Child Left Behind. The bottom line is we could double all the counselors, social workers and school psychologists tomorrow, and we need to, to try to meet the mental health needs of children.

We also have the opportunity with NCLB to ensure that school safety is given a very high priority. The child who is afraid at school, the child who is humiliated in the hallway—does it really matter how good my instructional lesson is?

We need to make sure that we take care of the fundamental needs for all children of safety, security and belonging, and then they can truly learn at the optimal level possible.

Mr. CASTLE. Thank you, Dr. Poland.

I yield back, Madam Chairwoman. My time is up.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you.

Mr. Scott?

Mr. CASTLE. Thank you.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

I want to thank all of our witnesses for testifying.

I want to start with Mr. Riach. You referred to some studies that showed that your program worked at $10 per child, and any measurable effect would obviously save more money than it cost. Could you comment on some of the studies that showed the effect of your program?

Mr. RIACH. Certainly. Thank you. In reference to some of the things Mr. Trump said earlier about measurement being so critical and what the members have commented on, we knew that it was critical that we measure the efficacy of the program, because it is not working, we shouldn't be out there doing.

And one of the key indicators and talking with educators in our 4 years of research and talking with the Department of Education was the reality that most character development programs lacked a tool to measure the efficacy of the program.

So what we did, Mr. Congressman, is we worked with a third party, an independent third-party, who provides measurement for us on an annual basis with every school district that we work with our individual school populations.

As a measure both that are coming out of there, the empirical data is very significant. Positive attitudinal behavioral shifts that are well beyond what——

Mr. SCOTT. Did you measure reduction in crime?

Mr. RIACH. Reduction in crime, reduction in——

Mr. SCOTT. Drug use?

Mr. RIACH [continuing]. Referrals, reduction in bullying——

Mr. SCOTT. Teen pregnancy?

Mr. RIACH [continuing]. Reduction in drug and alcohol use, reduction in abusive behaviors.

Mr. SCOTT. Dropping out?

Mr. RIACH. Reduction in dropouts. Increased GPAs as well.

Mr. SCOTT. If you could get copies of those studies, that would be extremely helpful.

Mr. RIACH. Absolutely.

Mr. SCOTT. Dr. Poland, could you say a word about whether or not how accurate your threat assessments are, how accurately you can predict who is at higher risk?

Dr. POLAND. I would certainly like to comment on threat assessment. And certainly, there is not the ability of any mental health professional or law enforcement professional to absolutely predict whether someone will carry out an act of violence.

And the real purpose of threat assessment is to reduce the stressors on the person in question, to try to figure out what is it that is causing him to be so troubled and so angry. And frankly, do they have the means to carry out the violence? So the real purpose is to reduce the stressors that the young person might be under, who is threatening violence towards others.

Mr. SCOTT. Well, do you have any studies that show that if you intervene, if you have done the threat assessment and intervene, it would make a difference?

Dr. POLAND. Absolutely. In fact, we have a number of what are called near misses in the literature, where a young person—usually, someone has come forward. One of their friends got concerned about their violent plans ended through law enforcement, mental health and school officials working together, there have been many, many situations that have been averted.

And of course, our goal is to make sure that every possible act of school violence is averted and stopped.

Mr. SCOTT. Can you talk about the cost-effectiveness of your prevention activities?

Dr. POLAND. Most of what I have talked about today really doesn't require that much in terms of increase in spending. It really has to do with priorities and somebody basically asking every school principal investigation, "Do you have a threat assessment team? What are you doing for school safety? What are the biggest concerns in your school? How are you pinpointing those? How are your students involved? How are your faculty involved in prevention?"

So I think it is much more attitudinal. Certainly, I would support expanding the number of professionals who work in school—absolutely. But I also believe that we can do a lot more with their existing personnel, if we make school safety a higher priority.

Mr. SCOTT. Well, there are other theories about what to do. What about suspending students on a zero-tolerance basis without any services? How effective is that in reducing school violence?

Dr. POLAND. I am very concerned when we suspend and expel a student, because now they are simply on the street, and there is no intervention. Sometimes I will say, "Why can't they come back to school at 4:30 after all the classmates went home and see the school counselor? How can we figure out? Do we have another more intensive structured program?"

Frankly, I don't believe we should have any students out of school. It is always a question of where is the next intervention? What will help them? We need to do more.

Mr. SCOTT. Okay. And can you say a word about the deterrent effect of longer prison sentences, the threat of longer prison sentences, and the threat of trying juveniles as adults?

Dr. POLAND. I am very concerned about the movement to essentially lock young people, as young as 12, 13, 14 and 15, up for the rest of their lives. Frankly, I wish we somehow could spend our money on prevention instead of incarceration.

And then we always have the dilemma of where do you put in the 11-year-old in Montana, who brought a gun to school and killed somebody? Where do you put a 15-year-old from Bethel, Alaska, who killed classmates? What can we do that is truly going to make a difference? And how do we keep them away from perhaps a much more hardened adult criminal population?

Mr. SCOTT. Well, they are trying.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you, Mr. Scott.

Mr. Andrews?

Mr. ANDREWS OF NEW JERSEY. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. Thanks for the opportunity to be here today.

Ms. Walker, I was particularly distressed when I heard your comment about the school officials, who reacted the way they did so densely to the problems you brought to their attention. Did they make any suggestions at all about how your son could have a better environment? Or did they just write this off as kids will be kids?

Ms. WALKER. Thank you for having me today. Actually, no, they did not. When I was alerted to the problem that Carl was having, I engaged with the guidance counselor at Carl's school. And I said to the guidance counselor, "It seems like he is having problems." The guidance counselor met with Carl once a week, starting in November, until his death, and she would come up with the grid for him for his teachers. In his teachers would sign in one if he behaved or zero if he didn't behave.

So what I found was that was sort of like the victim, which was Carl, he became the problem. It was like it was Carl's problem. There weren't any solutions. And there wasn't any notification given to me on the last day of his life that there was a major fight in the school involving Carl. So I didn't know what happened on April 6th. All I had was what Carl told me, and that is what I went by.

And my intention that night was to go to a PTO meeting, which was held that night, and take Carl with me so I could get to the bottom of what happened in school that day, because the school did not notify me.

Mr. ANDREWS OF NEW JERSEY. If I may, I think that your story is sadly typical, that young people who speak up and who are the victims of these problems somehow get classified as the problem themselves. And the idea that a grid was kept about his behavior is really offensive. And I think that it suggests that by speaking up as a human being to be treated with dignity, he was then mistreated. You know, that sort of a—anyone who speaks up is a—is a problem child.

Jackie, how typical do you think that is, based upon your experience and your research, that how much of a disincentive is there for a young person speak up and say, "Wait a minute. There is a problem here," and then they get blamed for it?

Ms. JACQUELYN ANDREWS. Thank you.

Mr. ANDREWS OF NEW JERSEY. You are welcome. [Laughter.]

Ms. JACQUELYN ANDREWS. The question is how typical is it for——

Mr. ANDREWS OF NEW JERSEY. How often does the person who speaks up, who is the victim, get blamed for speaking up?

Ms. JACQUELYN ANDREWS. All the time—not only from the teachers a lot of the time, but you were, "Why is this a problem?" And they will ask you, "Why is this a problem?" And they should be asking the bully themselves.

And it is also a main focus is actually the students themselves. The person who speaks up is so afraid to speak up, most commonly because of the fact that they are afraid they are going to be even more ridiculed by the bully, by the other students.

Mr. ANDREWS OF NEW JERSEY. Dr. Poland, what do we do about that problem? And I would tell you both anecdotally and from the research that I have benefited from that my daughters have done

and other research, that it does seem very typical that the reflex reaction of some school administrators say, "Oh, this kid is being a problem by speaking up."

What do we do to change the training and education of administrators and teachers to remedy that situation?

Dr. POLAND. Well, I think that was very well stated, and I think we are going to need to develop a lot of programs and to have a lot of resources and a lot of discussion with educators throughout the country. Sometimes they view bullying is kind of a rite of passage. Everybody got bullied. You just get through it.

Mr. ANDREWS OF NEW JERSEY. Yes.

Dr. POLAND. And thankfully, many people do get through it. But sometimes they do not, and it can have some long-lasting consequences. And it is just really important that we make certain that no child feels like it is his fault that he or she gets picked on, and we provide them all the support possible.

And their parents must be a part of the discussion so that parents have an opportunity to help their child, and we all work together to reduce the situations where bullying occurs and to make sure that children have the self-concept to realize, "It is not my fault."

Mr. ANDREWS OF NEW JERSEY. Ms. Walker, if I could just conclude with you. If you had the opportunity to tell the principal of your son's school one thing that principle should have done differently that might have avoided this awful, awful loss that you suffered, what should that principle have done?

Ms. WALKER. Well, when I talked to the principal on April 7th and I explained to her what happened to Carl, Carl was very upset because someone at the school had told him that he was facing a 5-day suspension, because the mediation for this incident was that he had to sit down and have lunch with the person who threatened to kill him.

And Carl was a nice kid, and he wanted to have lunch with the person, even though she threatened to kill him. But the other student did not want to have lunch with him.

And so when I told the principal, I said, "I don't really think that was, you know, a good idea to have, you know, my son had lunch with somebody who threatened to kill him." And she told me—her response was, "That is what we do. When there is a problem with a child, we have them sit down as mediation, and they have to try to work it out."

So obviously, clearly, that is a problem. If a child is being relentlessly bullied and your solution as the school is to have that child sit down with the people that are bullying him, and he is in fear of his life, that is a problem.

Mr. ANDREWS OF NEW JERSEY. I see my time has expired. The disturbing part of this is that the moral equivalent that it creates between a young man who is just trying to be a peaceful student and learn and someone who has decided to make his life miserable—to equate those two morally is very, very disturbing. Thank you.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. Thank you.

Mrs. Davis?

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And thank you very much, Ms. Walker, for being here.

And to all of you, especially the young people who are testifying.

I am going to try and go through a few questions really quickly, and then I want to yield to my colleague, Ms. Sanchez, because we are afraid that the time is going to run, but maybe if she has time, we will—I will have a chance to—just a few things.

One of the things you mentioned, Mr. Riach, about your program, and I know that the young women, the Andrews here, have said students need to be engaged in really creating a lot of these programs. And I know that many—if I read correctly, yours were more adult preparation, and yet they were very good. I mean they have had some good results.

And I am wondering how young people, if we can frame this within even No Child Left Behind to create an environment where young people are more really engaged and in many ways empowered to create these programs at their schools so that it is in a language that they know and understand with adult support.

Do you have any thoughts about that and whether you test out these programs with young people, because I know from my experience on the school board, too, it is, you know, when young people create the messages, they may know a whole lot more than some of the things that we think of, which are totally irrelevant to kids' lives. So I wondered about that particularly. We would just run through it.

The other question was how then, again in No Child Left Behind, we are able to embed some of these programs and curriculum. And if you have seen ways in which we can do that at the federal level, to video sharing, through some way and evaluating whether programs can be picked up in that way without having major—you know, so we don't have to invent the wheel repeatedly, recognizing that each school is different, each district is different. Any suggestions about that?

And finally, I am just wondering about the programs and the sensitivity to language. One of the things that we know, and this carries with us through our adult lives, and we are actually studying this as we look at sexual assault in the military, the language that is used, and a lot of it is language which is demeaning to women—someone is a sissy, someone, you know, and whether it is references to gays or whatever that may be—and I am wondering, in your experiences, if there is much effort on trying to change or help students understand that sensitivity to language and build in sort of their resilience to resist it. Thank you.

Mr. RIACH. Thank you very much. You remind me if I don't address something that you have asked. But the first question in terms of young people and their participation, we find that to be incredibly valuable, and we have high school and middle school students who participate in the creation of our curriculum.

We not only tell the story of people like Ann Abernathy, who is sitting behind me, who was a six-time Olympian, the only female six-time Olympian and oldest female Olympian in history, who is an incredible overcomer, who has overcome cancer and broken bones and knee surgeries and is fighting another bout with cancer, which she will overcome.

But we also tell the stories of teenagers, who—a homeless teenager, Lewis Daniels from New York, who ended up getting a scholarship to Yale. Some other teens have started respect programs in their schools, and we would like to profile these two young ladies after today.

But those stories are critical and the involvement of young people in creating those materials——

Mrs. DAVIS. Yes, I think that is my question—not that you tell the youth stories, but the role that they play in doing that.

And perhaps I don't know whether Jacqueline, or if you want to respond to that a little bit about how—because students have to be helped to provide that kind of direction.

Ms. JACQUELYN ANDREWS. You mean what are the incentives for a child?

Mrs. DAVIS. How you do it. You know, that—just to train young people to be able to do essentially what you are doing in the language of young people that would have more resonance in what they are doing.

Ms. JACQUELYN ANDREWS. Well, that is what our programs are set up to do, and they are basically we focused on different grades, three and four, five and six, seven and eight.

And for the third and fourth graders, they are like coloring books, picture books, where you would read them and the ending would never be finished. And it is the child's job themselves to finish the story. And then they are supposed to have discussions about it afterwards.

Or the seventh and eighth graders, who are going to read these stories, millions and millions of bullying stories online, but written by the victims, and they are meant to talk about and discuss what they have experienced, summarize what happened and how the children around them and they themselves, if they are ever in the situation, can make a difference about it.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you. That is helpful. I am really sorry to rush, but I know that I have always got some other folks who want to ask a question. So can I ask you just about the language? Is that something—and not just anybody there who could really reply—is that something that you think should be the focus is on these programs?

Ms. JOSIE ANDREWS. Well, I wrote actually a musical movie formatted for something like "High School Musical" and "Camp Rock" and the things that kids really do watch, because it is a fun way to learn about it, where kids will really understand, coming from a kid, and with songs and talking exactly the way they talk in a way that they would watch it anyway.

But these movies that I have watched and the Hannah Montana shows, they don't have a message to them. And I know a lot of people say in this world of TV and movies and everything, which is such a great way to reach kids, that they watch these movies and watch these TV shows to escape reality, and bullying is way too close to home.

But I think ignoring it is making it so much worse. And I think with the language of a real 14-year-old girl, who can relate to the 10-year-olds out there, who have been through the same exact thing that they have been through——

Mrs. DAVIS. Yes. I think what I am also concerned about is the——

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. I am sorry, Mrs. Davis, but we have really got to move on.

Mrs. DAVIS. Okay. Thank you. I was going to yield.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. You have no time left.

Mr. Payne? And then we have a vote going on, and we have 5 minutes, or just about 6 minutes. Maybe if we run down and vote——

You are not coming back.

All right, Mr. Payne, if you could just take a couple of minutes to get your question?

Mr. PAYNE. All right, great.

Well, I will certainly—one does not just see the Andrews Sisters. When I was growing up, there was a group called the Andrews Sisters. That was World War II. [Laughter.]

But it is nice to meet you. And what I will do, since Representative Woolsey has dealt with issues like these her business profession, I will yield my time so that perhaps she might want to ask the questions then.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Thank you very much.

I am sorry I wasn't here to hear your testimony. It was impossible.

I am most interested in the peer-to-peer group actions and activities. In my district in Santa Rosa, California, we have a great peer program that just started out with one school, one—I believe it was ninth and 10th graders, and now it has grown, gone to lower schools and the higher schools.

But I think we should concentrate on that and more, because, you know, most of this comes from home. We all know that, that if your parents teach you not to bully, you are probably—and they don't bully you—you probably won't.

But that doesn't mean when you get there that you are going to know how to handle it, because we have not prepared kids for subtle bullying. I mean guns, you talked about guns. You talked about name-calling, threatening. That is overt. But there is subtle bullying that only kids can pick up on and talk to each other about.

So talk to me about how you build these groups. How do you counsel the group so that it begins with kids counseling each other? And what happens when somebody hears about somebody being bullied?

Oh, all right.

Ms. JOSIE ANDREWS. Well, in our organization, SAVE, we are run by a national youth organization. We have 10 students from across the country, and we write the—have the same essential manual that every club across the country has, and it tells them how they should run their club and how they should handle specific problems.

So I think it is really important that students are the ones making the rules—not really the rules, but the manual. And we meet every year. We all come together, and they basically plan out everything that our club, the chapters, should do.

And I think peer-to-peer is very important, especially we are in elementary, middle and high school levels. And in elementary, the

teachers are more active than the club, and then the teacher gets lessened as they go on. And then in high school the students run the entire club.

So we seek—our advisors are there just for moral support, but it is really important to have students being in charge and making the rules, because students are more willing to listen to their friends rather than a teacher, who they are used to having to obey and to listen to the rules from.

Ms. WOOLSEY. So, either one of you Andrews, beautiful young women, tell me what happens when a kid can't handle something that is going on. Then what do you—where do you go from there when you are one of the peer counselors?

Ms. JACQUELYN ANDREWS. Well, it is—we are more—we have more about the program itself, and it is supposed to teach you how to deal with those programs by placing kids in situations based on our books and our stories. Our main focus is these—these paperback books that you see here.

Ms. WOOLSEY. So they learn by reading—and not by example exactly.

Ms. JACQUELYN ANDREWS. Right.

Ms. WOOLSEY. But your program—you get to have a school play that was all about something like this.

Ms. JACQUELYN ANDREWS. Yes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Okay. Any of the rest of you—I know we have got to go.

Mr. RIACH. So I would say I misunderstood the congresswoman's previous question, but they both tie in. Our program has peer activities that are critical thinking, decision-making exercises that are led by peers. There is also a peer recognition piece, so peers are recognizing and honoring and rewarding those who exhibit good character.

So what happens is you have a recognition, and you have got the instruction from the adults, but you also have something very unique going on peer-to-peer that creates a different environment.

And if I might, you know, one of the aspects that I think is so critical as it goes deeper than just what takes place from a anti-bullying standpoint. And I will give you an example.

In Keller, Texas, which is a suburb, a middle-class suburb, a teacher using our program asked eighth-grade students to define the word "integrity," and they were writing in their books. Out of the entire classroom, only one student was writing the answer, so he pulled back and he said, "Let us take a step back for a moment. How many of you in this room have ever heard the word 'integrity' or have the remotest idea what the concept is?" Only the student that was writing raised his hand.

So there is a whole education process that needs to take place with the students to prepare them not to bully. I mean we have got some work to do on the front end.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Right.

Yes, Mr. Trump?

Mr. TRUMP. Just real briefly, in addition to the wonderful programs that are there, would lead to safety assessments for schools, I always ask to speak with kids. And we will have parents, teach-

ers, psychologists, administrators, everyone, but a lot of times the kids aren't there.

And in addition to the formal programs, I think we just need to work on training school administrators and staff to have students at the table like we have today.

At one school a colleague of mine tells the story of how they were having break-ins at a parking lot in the high school where he was a school resource officer. And they had a student on the school safety committee, and there was a big debate with the adults. Do we need more—hire a police officer out there? And so a parent who happened to sell cameras said, "Well, my company could provide the cameras." And the student at the end of the adult discussion raised her hand and said, "Why don't you just arrest Johnny Jones? He is the one that is breaking into cars."

Ms. WOOLSEY. Right. [Laughter.]

Okay. We are through. Thank you so much.

Thank you very much, Madam Chairwoman.

Chairwoman MCCARTHY. I want to thank everybody. As you know, we have a vote. We are down to zero minutes remaining. So I want to thank all of our witnesses for being here. Each of you have highlighted really things that we need to look at as we go forward on our committees.

School violence and bullying is not acceptable in any way.

You have seen a little bit of confusion here. They are asking me to run over to Financial Services, because they had a gun amendment on the housing bill, and they had wanted me to speak up against it. But this is the life we are living and unless we stop the bullying and stop producing these people that are going into violence at a very early age, that is one way not only this country can be safer, but the world.

We have testimony from many different organizations that really wanted to speak. I think we could have a whole day of hearings with everyone that wanted to speak, but with that tight time that we have, because we are having hearings in the afternoon on different subjects, we needed to give it down to the minimum. But I do want to add a number of testimonies that did come in that wanted to be heard.

As previously ordered, members will have 14 days to submit additional materials for the hearing record. Any member who wishes to submit follow-up questions in writing to the witnesses should be coordinating with the majority staff within the requested time.

Without objection, this hearing is adjourned, and I thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Hinojosa follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Rubén Hinojosa, a Representative in Congress From the State of Texas

I want to thank Chairwoman McCarthy and Chairman Kildee for holding this important hearing. As a cosponsor of H.R. 2262, the "Safe Schools Improvement Act," and H.R. 1589, the "Bullying and Gang Reduction for Improved Education Act," legislation introduced by Rep. Linda Sánchez, I believe that unsafe, unhealthy learning environments adversely Affect our children, youth and families and contribute to our nation's dropout rate in our public schools. We must do more to ensure that many more of our students succeed and graduate.

Question for Kenneth S. Trump, President of National School Safety and Security Services

1. Mr. Trump, in your testimony, you underscore "that students and parents are key, but often missing partners in school safety programs."

I represent the fifteenth congressional district in Texas and many of my constituents are parents who are limited english proficient, low-income, and sometimes work two jobs to make a living. Given your wealth of experience, can you identify some national model programs that have been successful in engaging hispanic and minority parents on school safety and anti-bullying issues?

Question for Dr. Scott Poland, Faculty Member and Coordinator Suicide and Violence Prevention Office at NOVA Southeastern university in Fort Lauderdale, Florida

2. I understand from your testimony that you served as Director of Psychological Services for the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District in Houston, Texas for 23 years. In your testimony, you indicated that students do not look to adults for help because they fear retaliation, do not trust adults, and have been conditioned not to tell. Can you highlight some key programs that you developed in texas to build positive relationships among students, teachers, parents, and other adults on school campuses?

[The statement of Ms. Sánchez follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Linda T. Sánchez, a Representative in Congress From the State of California

I thank Chairs Kildee and McCarthy and Ranking Members Platts and Castle for allowing me to participate today. As you know, I have been committed to addressing bullying, harassment, and gang violence in schools since I came to Congress almost seven years ago. I am glad to see that this serious issue is getting the attention it deserves although I am sad and disappointed that it took the tragic suicides of so many young people to draw the nation's focus on the need to combat bullying.

That is why I have reintroduced both the Safe Schools Improvement Act and the Bullying and Gang Reduction for Improved Education Act.

Studies have shown that harassment and bullying of youth can lead to poor academic performance, truancy, and increased risk of suicide. Furthermore, when left unchecked, hostile school environments can lead to violence, as in the tragic case of California middle school student Lawrence King, who died in 2008 at the hands of a classmate who objected to his sexual orientation and gender expression.

LGBT youth are some of our nation's most vulnerable students, and some of the most frequent targets of bullying, and Congress must act to ensure that all youth are protected. As the Andrews sisters so eloquently stated, bullying is not just an example of kids being kids. As part of learning to be a good citizen, students must learn to do something about it. Mere bystanding only perpetuates the behavior and emboldens the bully. When we empower schools to teach children as well as school personnel to prevent and address bullying, we not only make schools safer, we make learning happen, and we even save lives.

I hope that the testimony given at today's hearing will show the desperate need to make sure that schools address bullying and harassment as part of their overall safe school strategies.

[Additional submissions of Mrs. McCarthy follow:]

Prepared Statement of the American Association of University Women

Subcommittee Chairmen Kildee and McCarthy and members of the Subcommittees, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for the hearing "Strengthening School Safety through Prevention of Bullying."

The American Association of University Women is a membership organization founded in 1881 with approximately 100,000 members and 1300 branches nationwide. AAUW has a proud 127-year history of breaking through barriers for women and girls and believes all students deserve safe learning environments. Today, AAUW continues its mission through education, research, and advocacy.

AAUW stands firmly by the belief that the country should provide an excellent education for all children. The 2009-2011 AAUW Public Policy Program of contains the firm belief that "* * * quality public education is the foundation of a democratic society" and advocates a "* * * bias-free public education * * *"[1] However, our na-

tion's schools face longstanding challenges in preventing and effectively responding to instances of bullying and harassment. Bullying and harassment interfere with a student's ability to achieve high standards and have a significant impact on GPAs, school attendance, dropout rates, and likelihood of obtaining a post-secondary education. In addition, bullying and harassment can lead to even greater school safety problems. Many high profile cases of school violence have been attributed to students who were bullied and harassed in school. Whether based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, religion, gender identity or any other characteristic, bullying and harassment interfere with students' ability to learn.

Legislation to Prevent Bullying

Although a limited number of federal laws address certain particular kinds of harassment, they do not prohibit all kinds of harassment in schools, and no federal law specifically prohibits bullying in schools. Therefore, the enactment of more comprehensive safe schools policies will fill a troubling gap in federal education policy—to ensure that all students, regardless of their background or personal characteristics, are provided a safe environment in which to learn and succeed.

Implementation of stronger policies is necessary to deter bullying and harassment and help to ensure safe learning environments for all students. Recent research shows that bullying affects nearly one in three American school children in grades six through ten.[2] A National School Boards' Association study found that half of those surveyed reported that they see other students being bullied at least once a month;[3] more disturbing is that almost half of students surveyed stated that they doubted teachers could stop the behavior.[4] AAUW believes that parents, educators, and advocates—together with students—should focus on changing the culture of harassment and bullying in schools. This can be done by promoting students' use of existing resources to address problems, and passage of legislation to better address both prevention of bullying and to ensure the implementation of strong policies should bullying and harassment occur.

AAUW supports legislation that prevents bullying and harassment and clearly enumerates categories of students that are protected. Children who attend schools with anti-harassment policies with clearly enumerated student categories report that they feel safer (54 percent vs. 36 percent) and are less likely to skip a class because they feel uncomfortable or unsafe (5 percent vs. 16 percent). Specific enumerated policies against bullying and harassment also make it more likely and easier for educators to intervene when they witness bullying and harassment. More than half of all teachers (53 percent) reported that bullying and harassment is a serious problem in their school. Students noted that teachers were more likely to intervene (25.3 percent vs. 12.3 percent) when bullying occurred, and were more likely to do so successfully (55.7 percent vs. 38.7 percent), if school policies included enumerated student categories (compared to non-enumerated policies).[5]

An example of an enumerated policy:

BULLYING—The term 'bullying' means conduct that

(A) adversely affects the ability of one or more students to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities by placing the student (or students) in reasonable fear of physical harm; and

(B) includes conduct that is based on——

(i) a student's actual or perceived——

(I) race;

(II) color;

(III) national origin;

(IV) sex;

(V) disability;

(VI) sexual orientation;

(VII) gender identity; or

(VIII) religion;

(ii) any other distinguishing characteristics that may be defined by a State or local educational agency; or

(iii) association with a person or group with one or more of the actual or perceived characteristics listed in clause (i) or (ii).

AAUW supports The Safe Schools Improvement Act, H.R. 2262, which clearly enumerates categories of students. In addition, the legislation would require that states, districts, and schools develop policies and programs to prevent and appropriately respond to instances of bullying and harassment as a condition of receiving federal funding. This proposal would require that:

- States, districts, and schools have in place policies prohibiting bullying and harassment; and

• Schools and districts establish complaint procedures to effectively respond to instances of harassment in a manner that is timely and results in educationally appropriate resolutions for students who are victims of bullying or harassment; and

• States include information regarding bullying and harassment in their required drug and violence prevention reports.

This proposed legislative language would also allow states, district, and schools to use funding under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act to:

• Provide professional development regarding strategies to prevent bullying and harassment and how to effectively intervene when such incidents occur; and

• Implement student education programs designed to teach students about the issues around, and consequences of, bullying and harassment.

Sexual Harassment

In addition to bullying, many students also face sexual harassment at school. Almost a decade ago, AAUW's own research revealed that 83 percent of girls and 79 percent of boys reported having experienced sexual harassment, and over one in four students stated that harassment happens "often."[6] Also, although large groups of both boys and girls report experiencing sexual harassment, girls are more likely to report being negatively affected by it.[7] In addition, if unchecked, bullying and harassment follow students to college. AAUW's more recent report, Drawing the Line: Sexual Harassment on Campus, found at the postsecondary level, nearly two-thirds of college students (62 percent) say they have been sexually harassed,[8] including nearly one-third of first year students;[9] 41 percent of students admit they have sexually harassed another student.[10]

Since AAUW's first research into this area in 1993, students have become more aware of their school's harassment policies and the resources available to them.[11] Unfortunately, students' increased awareness has not translated into fewer incidents of sexual harassment, nor has it increased the likelihood they would report such incidents.[12] Sexual harassment has serious implications for students, some of whom may experience a hostile educational environment on a daily basis. However, most do not report it or even talk openly about sexual harassment as a serious issue.[13]

How Title IX Protects Students from Sexual Harassment

Title IX protects students from unlawful sexual harassment in all of a school's programs or activities, whether they take place in the facilities of the school, on a school bus, at a class or training program sponsored by the school at another location, or elsewhere. Title IX protects both male and female students from sexual harassment, regardless of who the harasser may be.[14]

Title IX also prohibits sexual harassment by any employee or agent of the school. Covered institutions must have a procedure in place that provides for equitable resolution of sexual harassment complaints, which may be the same procedure set up for general Title IX complaints.[15]

Case Law and Regulations Addressing Sexual Harassment in Schools

In 1997, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) issued policy guidance on sexual harassment, outlining Title IX's requirements in this area and providing schools with much-needed help in defining, addressing, and preventing sexual harassment.[16] The 1997 guidance makes clear that inaction is never the right response to sexual harassment and urges schools to adopt policies and procedures that help prevent such misconduct. In 1998, however, the U.S. Supreme Court found in Gebser v. Lago Vista Intermediate School District that school districts were not liable for teacher-to-student sexual harassment unless there was prior knowledge of the harassment and demonstrated deliberate indifference.[17]

In 1999, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled again on sexual harassment in schools in Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education.[18] The court found that school districts can be held liable for student-to-student sexual harassment if the school district knew about the harassment and responded with deliberate indifference. The harassment must be severe, pervasive, and offensive, and it must interfere with the student's ability to get an education. Schools cannot, however, be held responsible for teasing and bullying.

In 2001, OCR released important new policy guidance on sexual harassment to clarify a school's obligations in light of the Gebser and Davis decisions.[19] The new 2001 guidance reinforces the 1997 guidance that schools are responsible for recognizing and remedying sexual harassment. Further, schools are potentially liable for failing to recognize or remedy such harassment.

Recommendations on Sexual Harassment

While many schools have taken the first step in creating policies and procedures to address this problem, more can be done to help alleviate the culture of harassment that disrupts the educational experience of so many students. Sexual harassment defies a simple solution but still demands action. As AAUW's research over the last decade demonstrates, the problem is unlikely to go away on its own. Dialogue is a good first step in the right direction. Students, teachers, and parents and guardians must begin to talk openly about attitudes and behaviors that promote or impede our progress toward a harassment-free climate in which all students can reach their full potential.

In addition to creating an atmosphere for productive and proactive dialogue on this issue, AAUW believes we must commit ourselves to strong Title IX enforcement at the local, state, and federal levels and ensure policymakers maintain a commitment to Title IX.

• First, education programs, activities, and institutions must comply with their Title IX responsibilities and ensure that programs do not discriminate on the basis of sex, including designating an employee to be responsible for compliance with Title IX (typically known as a Title IX coordinator).

• Second, Title IX coordinators and their respective schools/universities must proactively disseminate information in the school and campus community to ensure that students and employees are aware of sexual harassment policies, as well as the school's process for filing complaints.

• Third, the Department of Education must vigorously enforce all portions of Title IX in all aspects of education. Undertaking proactive compliance reviews to identify problems of sex discrimination and fully implementing Title IX regulations are important strategies of solid enforcement.

• Fourth, the Department of Education must be required to annually collect data across all areas of education at the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels. The data must be broken down by sex so that progress in achieving gender equity can be measured and tracked.

Communities must come together to shine a light on this issue and help students, faculty and staff, as well as parents and guardians, understand the many forms of sexual harassment and promote respectful and appropriate behaviors.

For the latest research on this issue, refer to AAUW reports available at *http://www.aauw.org/research/index.cfm.* For testimony on Title IX's impact on sexual harassment, given by Lisa Maatz, AAUW's Director of Public Policy and Government Relations, at a House Committee on Education and Labor hearing in June 2007, visit *http://www.aauw.org/About/newsroom/pressreleases/upload/titleIXTestimony—061907.pdf.*

Conclusion

All children must have a safe environment in which to learn. Currently, bullying and sexual harassment can significantly interfere with some students' ability to learn. AAUW strongly supports legislation that requires states and schools to develop policies to prevent bullying and harassment and procedures to effectively respond to such behavior. AAUW looks forward to working with Congress and the Obama Administration to develop these policies.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

ENDNOTES

[1] American Association of University Women. (June 2009). 2009—11 AAUW Public Policy Program.

[2] Members of the National Safe Schools Partnership (June 2007). Bridging the Gap in Federal Law: Promoting Safe School and Improved Student Achievement by Preventing Bullying and Harassment in our Schools. Retrieved on December 19, 2008, from *http://www.glsen.org/binary-data/GLSEN—ATTACHMENTS/file/000/000/912-1.pdf.*

[3] Hutton, Thomas. "No Right of Passage: Coming to Grips with Harassment and Bullying." National School Boards Association's Leadership Insider, p. 1. August 2006.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Harris Interactive and GLSEN (2005). From Teasing to Torment: School Climate in America, A Survey of Students and Teachers. Retrieved on July 6, 2009, from *http://www.glsen.org/binary-data/GLSEN—ATTACHMENTS/file/499-1.pdf*

[6] In 1993, AAUW released Hostile Hallways: The AAUW Survey on Sexual Harassment in America's Schools, which revealed that four out of five students in grades eight to 11 had experienced some form of sexual harassment. In 2001, the AAUW Educational Foundation released the follow-up report, Hostile Hallways: Bullying, Teasing, and Sexual Harassment in School, which found that nearly a decade later, sexual harassment remained a major problem and a significant barrier to student achievement in public schools. In response, AAUW developed a resource guide, Harassment-Free Hallways (2002), which provides guidelines and recommenda-

tions to help schools, students, and parents prevent and combat sexual harassment. All of these publications, including Drawing the Line, are available at *http://www.aauw.org/research.*

[7] Ibid on p. 32.

[8] AAUW Educational Foundation. (2006). Drawing the Line: Sexual Harassment on Campus, 15.

[9] Ibid, 2.

[10] Ibid, 22.

[11] AAUW Educational Foundation. (2001). Hostile Hallways: Bullying, Teasing, and Sexual Harassment in School, 4.

[12] Ibid, 5.

[13] AAUW Educational Foundation. (2006). Drawing the Line: Sexual Harassment on Campus, 33.

[14] U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. Sexual Harassment: It's Not Academic. Retrieved January 14, 2009, from *http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/ocrshpam.html.*

[15] U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. Sexual Harassment: It's Not Academic. Retrieved January 14, 2009, from *http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/ocrshpam.pdf.*

[16] U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. Sexual Harassment Guidance 1997. Retrieved January 14, 2009, from *http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/sexhar01.html.*

[17] Cornell University Law School. Alida Star Genser and Alida McCullough, Petitioners v. Lago Vista, Independent School District. Retrieved July 2, 2009 from *http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/96-1866.ZO.html.*

[18] National Women's Law Center. Sexual Harassment, Davis v. Monroe Brief. Retrieved January 14, 2009, from *http://www.nwlc.org/pdf/DavisBrief.pdf.*

[19] U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance: Harassment of Students by School Employees, Other Students, or Third Parties; Notice. Retrieved January 14, 2009, from *http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/other/2000-4/110200b.html.*

Prepared Statement of the American Psychological Association

On behalf of the 150,000 members and affiliates of the American Psychological Association (APA), we thank you for holding this timely hearing on improving school safety through bullying prevention.

APA is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world's largest association of psychologists. Comprising researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants, and students, APA works to advance psychology as a science, a profession, and as a means of promoting health, education and human welfare. Psychologists play a vital role in researching the causes and consequences of bullying in schools, as well as in preventing bullying through the development, implementation, and dissemination of research-based practices. In 2004, APA membership adopted a policy statement on bullying among children and youth, underscoring the tremendous commitment of psychologists and APA to this critical issue.

Background Issues

Bullying is defined as aggressive behavior that is intended to cause harm or distress, involves an imbalance of power or strength between the victim and aggressor, and occurs repeatedly over time. It takes many forms, including physical violence and intimidation, teasing and name-calling, and social exclusion and the manipulation of social relationships. Increasingly, students report experiencing cyberbullying, a form of bullying that utilizes information technology, including email, instant messaging, cell phones, and Web sites, including social networks, such as Facebook and Myspace.

Bullying is very widespread and impacts students regardless of their race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or whether they live in an urban, suburban, or rural area. Within a given school semester, 16 percent of students report being bullied with some frequency, and one study found that more than three-quarters of students reported being bullied at some point during their school years.

Children who regularly bully their peers tend to be impulsive, easily frustrated, dominant in personality, have difficulty conforming to rules, view violence positively, and are more likely to have friends who are also bullies. Boys who bully are usually physically stronger than their peers.

Individual, family, peer, school, and community risk factors are associated with bullying. With respect to family factors, children are more likely to bully if they experience a lack of warmth and parent involvement, lack of parental supervision, and harsh corporal discipline. Some research suggests that young people who have suffered maltreatment engage in bullying behavior more frequently than their peers.

Children who are the victims of bullying fall into one of two categories: "passive" victims of bullying, and "provocative victims" (also known as "bully-victims"). Passive victims of bullying are often cautious, sensitive, insecure, socially isolated, and have difficulty asserting themselves among their peers. Boys who are bullied tend to be physically weaker than their peers. Children who have been victims of child abuse (neglect or physical or sexual abuse), who have disabilities, or who are or are perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender are also more likely to be bullied by their peers. Children who are provocative victims are bullied but they also tend to bully other children. They frequently display some behavioral problems associated with children who bully others, as well as social-emotional behaviors associated with victimization.

The Psychosocial Effects Associated with Bullying

Bullying can exert short- and long-term psychological effects on both children who bully and those who are bullied by others, including negative impact on their level of engagement and learning in school. Bullying others has been linked to other forms of antisocial behavior, such as vandalism, shoplifting, skipping class, dropping out of school, fighting, and substance use. One study found that boys who were identified as "bullies" in middle school were four times as likely as other boys to have multiple criminal arrests by their early 20s.

Additionally, children victimized by bullying experience negative psychosocial functioning, including lowered self-esteem, higher rates of depression, anxiety, feelings of loneliness, suicidal ideation, and higher rates of school absenteeism. In extreme cases, victims of bullying attempt or complete suicide. Furthermore, a study completed by the United States Secret Service and the United States Department of Education of multiple fatality school shootings found that 75 percent of the perpetrators had felt persecuted, bullied, threatened, or injured by others, prior to the incident.

State-Level Approaches to the Reduction of Bullying

Thirty-nine states have enacted legislation to address the problem of bullying in schools, all of which encourage or require the development by the State education agency, school districts, or schools of policies that prohibit bullying. Beyond this commonality, great variation exists across these laws with regard to: whether and how they define bullying; the extent to which they set requirements for anti-bullying policies; and the inclusion of support for training and prevention.

Effective Prevention of Bullying

Recent meta-analyses show that bullying prevention programs can effectively decrease the incidence of bullying in schools. While data from certain programs revealed problems, and even increased rates of bullying, the differences between underperforming programs and effective programs are instructive.

The most effective prevention strategies involve the entire school as a community, provide intensive intervention when bullying does occur, and change the climate of the school and norms for behavior. It is crucial that parents, caretakers, educators, administrators, health and mental health care professionals, cafeteria workers, school bus drivers, other school contractors and employees, and researchers work together to reduce bullying. Prevention strategies should span from kindergarten through high school and involve educating the school community about bullying, as well as implementing school policies that set clear behavioral expectations.

Effective strategies include: consistent open dialogue about the causes and consequences of bullying via classroom discussions, role plays, and parent-teacher meetings; immediate intervention by school staff when bullying occurs and adequate adult supervision for at-risk situations (hallways during class transitions and playgrounds); and strict enforcement of negative consequences in front of student bystanders, which demonstrates that bullying behavior is not acceptable. Separate follow-up meetings with the students involved in a bullying dynamic and their respective parents help to ensure that bullying does not continue and that children who are bullied receive needed support.

Parents must also be involved actively in their children's lives and intervene in a supportive and empathetic nature if they believe their or another child is being bullied. To help prevent bullying, parents should talk regularly and openly about bullying and peer relations, set clear expectations about children's behavior, carefully monitor children's behavior, enforce clear and concise behavioral guidelines, and reward children for positive, inclusive behavior. Furthermore, parents should seek assistance from the school's principal, teachers, and health and mental health professionals if concerns arise regarding their or another child's behavior.

Bullying Prevention and Other School Reforms

Bullying prevention dovetails with other efforts to improve school climate and address problems related to student behavior. In 2005, the APA Zero Tolerance Task Force reported on the evidence-base surrounding the use of school disciplinary policies that require specific, and usually severe and punitive, responses by schools to student conduct violations. They found not only anecdotal evidence of zero tolerance leading to student expulsions for extremely minor infractions, but also that zero tolerance fails to promote safer schools. In response, the Task Force proposed the dissemination of prevention programs with a base in research and proven effectiveness, including bullying prevention, threat assessment, social and emotional learning, and positive behavioral supports (PBS). In addition, it should be noted that PBS schools already have in place an infrastructure into which bullying prevention programs fit naturally.

Recommendations

With regard to the federal investment in bullying prevention, APA recommends:

• Building on the adoption of H. Res. 762 from the 110th Congress, which declared support for the goals of National Bullying Prevention Awareness Week, by passing H.R. 1589, the Bullying and Gang Reduction for Improved Education Act of 2009;

• Implementing and disseminating comprehensive, research-based bullying interventions within schools and communities;

• Supporting research that will lead to a better understanding of bullying and victimization, as well as evaluate and further refine evidence-based prevention programs that work;

• Training for all school personnel (e.g., teachers, cafeteria workers, school-bus drivers, maintenance workers, school nurses, and mental health professionals) on bullying and bullying prevention; and

• Providing funding to support the implementation of effective bullying prevention programs.

Conclusion

In closing, the American Psychological Association would like to thank you again for convening this important hearing and for the Committee's ongoing commitment to the positive development of children and adolescents. We look forward to working with the Committee, as it develops effective prevention initiatives to address critical problems in the nation's schools.

Prepared Statement of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittees: We thank both Subcommittees for holding a hearing on the issue of preventing bullying and harassment in schools. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund—the oldest national advocacy organization for the civil rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people—represents a community with a substantial stake in the question of how to create safe schools. Among the groups at highest risk of aggressive bullying and harassment in schools are LGBT children and young adults, children and young adults who are perceived by peers to be LGBT, and the children of LGBT parents. Sadly, the nation has recently witnessed many youth suicides that were caused by severe and unremitting school bullying targeted at a student's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. This year, for example, Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover, an 11-year old in Massachusetts committed suicide because he faced daily anti-gay slurs and aggressive bullying. As such examples demonstrate, unsafe schools can have profoundly destructive consequences.

Congress has an important role in addressing bullying and harassment in schools. Bullying and harassment are often motivated by homophobia, biphobia (hostility toward bisexual individuals) or transphobia (hostility toward transgender individuals and other persons who do not conform to socially-expected gender roles). Such forms of violence are not confined to any particular state or region; they are national problems deserving of federal legislative attention.

The Task Force Action Fund welcomes federal measures to increase school safety that are cognizant of the specific prejudices faced by LGBT students and families. We ask Congress to pass measures that enumerate specific categories of protection, including sexual orientation and gender identity, and that promote inclusive education about sexual orientation and gender identity.

As one concrete measure, we ask you to prioritize passage of H.R. 2262, the Safe Schools Improvement Act, introduced by Representative Linda Sanchez. The Safe Schools Improvement Act amends the Safe and Drug Free Schools Act to help schools prevent bullying and harassment. Importantly, N.R. 2262 expressly addresses bullying and harassment that target a students actual or perceived identity or associations with persons or groups on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or religion. The Act also enables states and localities to define other categories of protection.

This enumeration of protection found in the Safe Schools Improvement Act serves many important purposes. It provides explicit guidance to policymakers, school officials and teachers. For many LGBT students, inaction by teachers and school officials can often exacerbate bullying and harassment by giving the false impression that targeting students on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity is permissible. Furthermore, by expressly protecting students on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity, and on the basis of association with LGBT people, the Act would send a strong and clear message that schools have a duty to actively protect all students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. We urge you to support the Safe Schools Improvement Act and similar measures. Schools, by their very nature, should be places of safety, not fear. No child should have to endure what Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover and many others have faced; no family should have to fear the terrible potential consequences of unceasing bullying and harassment. We thank both Subcommittees for holding this hearing.

Prepared Statement of Jennifer Chrisler, Executive Director, Family Equality Council

On behalf of the thousands of families that support Family Equality Council, the national organization working to ensure equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) families by building community, changing hearts and minds, and advancing social justice for all families, I would like to thank Chairman Kildee and Chairwoman McCarthy, along with Ranking Members Castle and Platts, for holding this important hearing on bullying and harassment prevention in our country's schools. Bullying cannot be dismissed as "kids being kids." It is a serious public health issue that impacts the long-term social, academic, psychological and physical well-being of our youth, with outcomes ranging from academic decline to suicide. This hearing is an important and welcome first step toward addressing this pervasive problem in our nation's schools.

The mission of Family Equality Council is to create and protect happy, healthy LGBT-headed families. Central to this is the ability of our children to attend school without fear of bullying, violence and harassment because of who their parents are or how their families were formed.

Studies show that alarming numbers of children of LGBT parents report experiencing bullying and harassment at school because of the families they come from. In 2008, Family Equality Council issued a report in partnership with the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Educators Network which found that nearly half of surveyed children with LGBT parents—forty-two percent—reported experiencing verbal harassment in the previous twelve months at school because of their family composition, including negative remarks specifically about having an LGBT parent. In addition, over one third reported that they had been verbally harassed because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation and nearly one third had experienced verbal harassment because of the way they expressed their gender.

Studies such as this, and many others, demonstrate why school policies that enumerate protected categories including sexual orientation and gender identity are vital to school safety and protection from bullying and harassment. Students who attend schools with anti-harassment policies that enumerate categories of students for protection report that they feel safer (54% vs. 36%) and are less likely to skip a class because they feel uncomfortable or unsafe (5% vs. 16%). Enumerating categories does not create special groups or privileges; rather, it provides protection in a way that research has shown is essential for protecting all students equally.

Currently, federal law does not comprehensively and expressly address issues of school bullying and harassment and in no way addresses the challenges LGBT youth and children of LGBT parents face in schools. The Safe Schools Improvement Act, H.R. 2262, which was introduced on May 5 by California Representative Linda Sµnchez and joined by lead cosponsors Florida Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and New York Representative Carolyn McCarthy as well as 40 bipartisan cosponsors, would substantially increase the success of schools in keeping our children safe. H.R. 2262 would strengthen existing laws protecting youth in schools by re-

quiring schools and districts receiving federal funds to adopt codes of conduct specifically prohibiting bullying and harassment, including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

As a parent, and on behalf of all the LGBT families and children Family Equality Council serves, I urge Congress to focus on the pressing issue of bullying and harassment in its effort to promote safety in American schools and to protect our youth by supporting and passing H.R. 2662.

Prepared Statement of Meredith Fenton, COLAGE Program Director

COLAGE is pleased to submit this testimony in support of the Federal Safe Schools Improvement Act. As a national network of children, youth, and adults who have one or more lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) parents, we intimately know the importance of striving for safer school environments for all students nationwide.

All students in the United States have a right to an educational environment that is safe and supportive. Compulsory education at the primary level was affirmed as a human right by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. However the existence of harassment, name-calling and bullying plagues US schools and is significantly impacting the ability of students with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or queer (LGBTQ) parents to learn and thrive in their educational environments.

Schools are not safe for students with LGBTQ parents. Middle and High School aged youth with LGBTQ parents face heightened levels of bullying, name-calling and harassment. In a 2008 report released by GLSEN, COLAGE and the Family Equality Council about the experiences of middle and high school students with LGBTQ parents we learned how large this problem is: a majority of youth with LGBTQ parents often hear derogatory remarks about LGBTQ people and families while they are in school. Over a third of youth with LGBTQ parents are being verbally harassed and a tenth of students experience physical harassment and assault each year. Nearly a half of COLAGE students report having rumors or lies spread about them in school specifically because they had an LGBTQ parent. More than half of students say that they do not feel safe in their school because they have an LGBTQ parent and/or because other students assume that they, themselves are LGBTQ. Students who don't feel safe in their school are much more likely to skip class or miss entire days of school.

Teachers and School staff often contribute to the problem of bullying and harassment faced by students with LGBTQ parents. In a 2008 report released by GLSEN, COLAGE and the Family Equality Council about the experiences of middle and high school students with LGBTQ parents, only 38% of students surveyed said that staff frequently intervened when hearing remarks about LGBTQ parents and even smaller percentages of teachers and staff intervene when they hear or observe name-calling or bullying based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Even more upsetting, nearly a fourth of students have experienced negative comments or verbal harassment from a teacher and/or school staff about LGBTQ people and/or families. Any degree of biased or derogatory language from school staff should be considered unacceptable and not tolerated in our schools. Hearing biased language from teachers or other school authority figures may send a message to students that such language use is tolerated and even acceptable. Many students have encountered a teacher, principal or other school staff person who discouraged them from talking about their family at school, and more than a third feel that school personnel doesn't acknowledge LGBTQ families in their school community.

Students with LGBTQ Parents face barriers to participation in their school communities. In the aforementioned study, a fifth of students reported feeling excluded from school or classroom activities in the past school year specifically because they had LGBTQ parents. Sometimes they feel excluded because they received negative responses about having LGBTQ parents or had been discouraged by school staff from being open about their parents or family. Students often tell us how parental forms are difficult to fill out because they are not inclusive for LGBTQ families. Many students describe situations where they feel excluded from classroom activities, particularly activities that involved discussion of families, because there were no representations of LGBTQ families or the activity was based on the assumption that all students came from families with straight parents.

COLAGE invites you to take a stand and to better protect thousands of students in the US who have LGBTQ parents. From Alex, a middle schooler who was left no choice but to transfer schools in California after facing relentless bullying about his lesbian mothers and gay fathers, to John, a high school student in Massachu-

setts who fears harassment about his family so keeps the fact that he has gay parents a secret, to Marcus who was suspended from his elementary school in Louisiana after using the word 'lesbian' to describe his mothers, COLAGE youth navigate unwelcoming school environments every day. COLAGE calls on the United States Congress to adopt the Safe Schools Improvement Act swiftly and decisively. By doing so, you will recommit America's schools toward creating safer environments for all students and will make great strides in ensuring that students with LGBTQ parents have equal access to an unbiased and safe education.

Prepared Statement of Stephanie Stines, Executive Committee Member, DC Concerned Providers Coalition

The DC Concerned Providers coalition (DCCP) is a network of youth service providers in the Washington, DC area committed to working together to decrease HIV/STI rates among DC area young transgender women of color and young men of color who have sex with men.

DCCP would like to thank Chairman Kildee and Chairwoman McCarthy, along with Ranking Members Castle and Platts for convening this important hearing to discuss the important role of preventing bullying and creating safe schools, and for the opportunity to submit testimony for the record.

We are submitting our testimony to urge Congress to focus on the issues of student bullying and harassment in promoting safe schools efforts. Bullying is a serious problem through out schools in the United States. It has adverse effects on school children's GPAs, school attendance, and the likelihood of obtaining a post-secondary education. Research shows that nearly one in eleven students missed a class or a day of school because they felt unsafe.

We ask that Congress require schools and districts to enact anti-bullying and harassment policies that include enumerated categories, such as sexual orientation and gender identity; and that Congress include this requirement as part of any comprehensive education legislation. Students who attend schools with anti-harassment policies that enumerate categories of students for protection report that they feel safer (54% vs. 36%) and are less likely to skip a class because they feel uncomfortable or unsafe (5% vs. 16%). Specific enumerated policies against bullying and harassment also make it more likely and easier for educators to intervene when they witness bullying and harassment. More than half of all teachers (53%) reported that bullying and harassment of students is a serious problem in their school. Students noted that teachers were more likely to intervene (25.3% vs. 12.3%) when bullying occurred, and were more likely to do so successfully (55.7% vs. 38.7%), if school policies included enumerated categories (compared to non-enumerated policies).

DCCP coalition recognizes the importance of creating a safe supportive school environment for youth, particularly Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Questioning (GLBTQ) youth. This can reduce a youth's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. If a youth feels safe and welcomed at their schools, their tendency to drop out of school and engage in high risk sexual behavior could be significantly reduced.

We strongly urge Congress to pass the proposed legislative language, HR 2262 (The Safe Schools Improvement Act) that would require that states, districts, and schools develop policies and programs to prevent and appropriately respond to instances of bullying and harassment as a condition of receiving federal funding. This proposal would require that:

- States, districts, and schools have in place policies prohibiting bullying and harassment; and
- Schools and districts establish complaint procedures to effectively respond to instances of harassment in a manner that is timely and results in educationally appropriate resolutions for students who are victims of bullying or harassment; and
- States include information regarding bullying and harassment in their required drug and violence prevention reports.
- Provide professional development regarding LGBT cultural competency, strategies to prevent bullying and harassment and how to effectively intervene when such incidents occur; and
- Implement student education programs designed to teach students about the issues around, and consequences of, bullying and harassment.

Prepared Statement of Joan Cole Duffell, Executive Director, Committee for Children

Committee for Children thanks Chairman Kildee and Chairwoman McCarthy, along with Ranking Members Castle and Platts, for convening this important hear-

ing to discuss the important role of preventing bullying and creating safe schools, and for the opportunity to submit the following written testimony for the record.

Committee for Children

Committee for Children is an international nonprofit organization whose mission is to foster the social and emotional development, safety, and well-being of children through education and advocacy. Our organization, based in the State of Washington, develops and publishes top-rated, evidence-based educational prevention programs for use with children from preschool through middle school. These curricula teach children vital social and emotional skills to reduce and prevent bullying, harassment and sexual abuse and other problem behaviors, promote personal safety and improve academic learning environments for all kids. Our programs are taught in 25,000 schools in the U.S. and in thousands more settings in 21 countries around the world. These evidence-based curricula and teacher training programs focus on teaching kids the essential skills of empathy, emotion management, problem solving, and personal safety, integrated with key learning-related skills. Research shows that children who learn these essential social and emotional skills treat one another with greater respect and compassion, perform better in school and throughout their lives. By teaching these skills in the classroom, educators create safer and more productive school climates in which all children can learn and thrive. These programs have garnered top "exemplary" and "model" program ratings from the US Departments of Education (Office of Safe & Drug-Free Schools); Justice (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention); and Health (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration), as well as CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning).

Promoting Safe Schools Efforts

Committee for Children supports Chairwoman McCarthy's Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act (called HR 354 in the 100th Congress). As an organization committed to evidence-based practice, we value highly the emphasis this bill places on solid data collection and reporting in focusing on issues of student bullying and harassment and promoting safe schools efforts.

Our nation's schools face longstanding challenges in preventing and effectively responding to instances of bullying and harassment. The U.S. Department of Education has noted this problem and recognized that bullying and harassment "affects nearly one in every three American schoolchildren in grades six through ten." Bullying and harassment interfere with a student's ability to achieve high standards. Bullying and harassment have a significant impact on GPAs, school attendance, dropout rates, and likelihood of obtaining a post-secondary education. Research shows that nearly one in eleven students missed a class or a day of school because they felt unsafe. And we know that bullying and harassment can lead to even greater school safety problems. Many high profile cases of school violence—as well as incidents that are less noted—have been attributed to students who were bullied and harassed in school.

Bullying and harassment, whether based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, religion, gender identity or any other characteristic, interfere with a student's ability to learn. A study commissioned by GLSEN and conducted by Harris Interactive found that physical appearance, sexual orientation (actual or perceived), and gender expression are the most common reasons for bullying and harassment in our nation's schools (39%, 33% and 28% respectively). The same study noted that only 36% of students who attend schools without enumerated anti-bullying and harassment policies report that they feel safe and 16% are likely to skip a class because they feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

Many schools are increasingly aware of the damaging effects of bullying on children. Bullying can leave permanent scars on the confidence and self-esteem of a child. Bullying also takes a toll on schools in the form of student absences, behavior problems, parent complaints, and classroom disruptions. Students and educators are likely to feel unsafe in an environment where bullying and violence are tolerated. In some cases, bullying even has deadly consequences.

Federal Law

Committee for Children urges Congress to focus on the enactment of more comprehensive safe schools policies that will fill the gap, and to further fund bullying prevention programs.

Although a limited number of federal laws address certain particular kinds of harassment, they do not prohibit all kinds of harassment in schools, and no federal law specifically prohibits bullying in schools. Therefore, the enactment of more comprehensive safe schools policies will fill a troubling gap in federal education policy—

to ensure that all students, regardless of their background or characteristics, are provided a safe environment in which to learn.

The problems of bullying and harassment are among the most prevalent and profound that schools face; they continue to seriously disrupt our school environments and affect the lives of millions of students every year, with major adverse academic and safety consequences. Congress should take steps to ensure that no student is denied access to a quality education based on fear or degradation associated with bullying and harassment.

Perhaps the largest gap—and that which is most problematic for schools, is funding. It is vitally important that we actually FUND bullying prevention programs in order for them to be implemented in schools. We understand there is a suggestion to use USDE Safe and Drug-Free funds for bullying prevention. We support this idea, but it is vital to point out that the President's 2010 education budget has currently zeroed out the states' Safe and Drug-Free funding. These critically needed funds have decreased precipitously year over year, even though these monies are most often used by educators specifically to pay for school safety programs.

Importance to Committee for Children

CFC works with over 25,000 schools that are implementing our prevention programs with over 9 million children nationwide. Schools and districts are in need of this support from Congress to both fund and implement safe schools efforts. Without funding allocations, our 25,000 school clients are likely to abandon their school safety and violence prevention efforts.

Qualities of Effective Bullying Prevention Programs

It is vital that this policy list the qualities of effective programming. Taxpayer money should be funneled toward programs that work. There is a growing body of research that points out the critical and core elements for any effective bullying prevention effort. This includes:

- Implementation of research-based student curricula, teacher training and parent education programs
- Programs should also be "evidence-based," meaning they have been shown effective in reducing bullying and improving student behavior in research studies published in peer-reviewed journals
- Programs should focus on whole-school implementation—all adults should be working together to address bullying and school safety
- Training for all adults in the school must be part of the program, so that teachers, administrators and support staff learn to recognize and respond effectively to bullying
- Programs must be replicable and relatively easy for schools to implement system-wide
- Student curricula need to be well-designed, appeal to diverse audiences, and be pedagogically sound
- Student curricula should teach social and emotional competence skills
- Bullying prevention lessons should place a strong focus on bystander behavior

Proposed Legislative Action

This proposed legislation would allow states, districts and schools to use funding under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act to provide professional development regarding strategies to prevent bullying and harassment and how to effectively intervene when such incidents occur; and implement student education programs designed to teach students about the issues around, and consequences of, bullying and harassment. We support this idea, but it is vital to point out that the President's 2010 education budget has currently zeroed out the states' formula grants for Safe and Drug-Free funding. These critically needed funds have decreased precipitously year over year, even though these monies are most often used by educators specifically to pay for school safety programs.

We urge Congress to assure that the states' formula grants portion of SDFS funds be reinstated—indeed, increased from previous years' allocations—in the 2010 budget, so that school safety programs can, in fact, be implemented with these funds.

Conclusion

Committee for Children respectfully urges Congress to address the key issue of funding for bullying prevention programs. Without stable, adequate funding sources to implement and sustain effective, evidence-based bullying and violence prevention programs, schools are left without the resources required to adequately protect and nurture the children in their care. Through the Departments of Education, Justice, and Health, Congress has wisely supported the evaluation of school safety programs to determine which programs are most effective in preventing violence and bullying.

We know what works. Most educators are aware of the impact of bullying on their students' health, safety, and school success and want to address this critical issue with effective strategies. However, schools need resources to implement programs that have been shown to work.

Committee for Children once again thanks Chairman Kildee and Chairwoman McCarthy, along with Ranking Members Castle and Platts, for convening this important hearing and for the opportunity to submit written testimony for the record.

Prepared Statement of Eliza Byard, Ph.D., Executive Director, Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network

Chairman Kildee, Ranking Member Castle, Chairwoman McCarthy, Ranking Member Platts and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony regarding the importance of preventing bullying and harassment in the nation's schools in order to ensure school safety and create school environments where all students can achieve high standards. We appreciate the attention of your subcommittees, as well as the support of Chairman Miller and Ranking Member Kline, in convening this hearing on Strengthening School Safety through the Prevention of Bullying. I am happy to inform this Committee that over 40 national education, health care, civil rights, law enforcement, youth development, and other organizations—all members of the National Safe Schools Partnership—have called on Congress to address this important challenge with specific recommendations.

I am pleased to offer these comments on behalf of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) as the convener and a member of the National Safe Schools Partnership. We believe that all students are entitled to an education free from bullying and harassment and want to thank you for recognizing this widespread problem. Before I start, I also want to acknowledge the tremendous leadership of Representatives Linda Sμnchez, Iliana Ros-Lehtinen and Chairwoman McCarthy for their role in introducing H.R. 2262, the Safe Schools Improvement Act, to promote school safety and prevent bullying and harassment.

GLSEN is proud to join the National Safe Schools Partnership to support the Safe Schools Improvement Act, which currently has the support of 60 bipartisan cosponsors. As you know, in the 110th Congress the House Committee on Education and Labor included key provisions of the Safe Schools Improvement Act in the Miller-McKeon discussion draft to reauthorize the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). These provisions and other elements of the Safe Schools Improvement Act were also included in the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee's Kennedy-Enzi discussion draft to reauthorize NCLB. We encourage the Committee to approve H.R. 2262, or to consider including its provisions in future legislation to reauthorize NCLB.

Meeting the ambitious proficiency goals set forth by the No Child Left Behind Act, and ensuring the academic success of all students, will only be possible when every child feels safe in the classroom. Evidence demonstrates that bullying and harassment significantly impact academic performance, school attendance, dropout rates and a student's likelihood of obtaining a post-secondary education. In fact, our research shows that nearly one in 11 students missed a class or a day of school, within the past month, because they felt unsafe. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education has concluded that bullying and harassment "affects nearly one in every three American schoolchildren in grades six through ten." And we know that bullying and harassment can lead to even greater school safety problems. Many high-profile cases of school violence—as well as incidents that are less noted—have been attributed to students who were bullied and harassed in school. This research, and other findings I will describe later in my testimony, were published by members of the National Safe Schools Partnership in June of 2007 in a policy paper titled, "Bridging the Gap in Federal Law: Promoting Safe Schools and Improved Student Achievement By Preventing Bullying and Harassment in Our Schools." (A copy of the document is attached for your review and inclusion in the Record.)

H.R. 2262 would strengthen state and local efforts to prevent bullying and harassment by amending the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA). Leveraging the existing SDFSCA structure, and existing public school student conduct codes, provides an opportunity for Congress to meaningfully address bullying and harassment, with a minimal burden at the state and local level. Although a limited number of federal laws address particular kinds of harassment, they do not prohibit all kinds of harassment in schools, and no federal law specifically prohibits bullying in schools. Therefore, addressing bullying and harassment—passing H.R. 2262, or similar language—will fill a troubling gap in federal education

policy and ensure that all students, regardless of their background, are provided a safe environment in which to learn.

H.R. 2262 would require states and districts to maintain and report data regarding incidents of bullying and harassment, in order to inform the development of effective policies and intervention strategies. The legislation would also direct states to include a bullying and harassment analysis in mandatory school safety needs assessments and require better public reporting of bullying and harassment incidents, along with enhanced coordination among relevant state agencies. In order to enhance these principles, the legislation requires state needs assessments to include students' perceptions regarding their school environment, including with respect to the prevalence and seriousness of incidents of bullying and harassment and the responsiveness of the school to those incidents.

In order to focus on effective prevention strategies and professional development, school districts would be required to establish bullying and harassment prevention programs, and H.R. 2262 would provide support for professional development needed to make the programs work effectively. In order to support prevention efforts the bill calls for annual communications to parents, including describing a local education agency's processes and procedures for addressing bullying and harassment grievances. The language would require that such parent and student communications include the name of the district staff person designated to receive and handle bullying and harassment complaints and by setting a timeline for resolving them. Authorizing funding for educating students about the consequences of bullying and harassment is also vitally important to fostering a safe learning environment. We also strongly support directing governors to prioritize Safe and Drug Free Schools funding applications that include bullying and harassment prevention plans, as well as to require the establishment of performance indicators designed to ensure prevention programs and activities are working.

Lastly, any federal legislation to address bullying and harassment must define those behaviors. A study commissioned by GLSEN and conducted by Harris Interactive concluded that students who attend schools with anti-harassment policies that enumerate categories of students for protection report that they feel safer (54% vs. 36%) and are less likely to skip a class because they feel uncomfortable or unsafe (5% vs. 16%), compared to students at schools with non-enumerated policies.

Correspondingly, specific enumerated policies against bullying and harassment also make it more likely and easier for educators to intervene when they witness bullying and harassment. More than half of all teachers (53%) reported that bullying and harassment of students is a serious problem in their school. Students reported that teachers were more likely to intervene effectively (45.7% vs. 33.2%) when harassment or assault occurred, if school policies included enumerated categories (compared to non-enumerated policies).

Expanding the definition of violence to include bullying and harassment is crucial, and it must be coupled with a clear explanation that all students, regardless of their background (including, among other grounds, sexual orientation or gender identity/expression) must be protected from bullying and harassment.

This comprehensive approach to bullying and harassment—including needs assessments, reporting & communications requirements, prevention programs & professional development, and the definitions recommended above—would substantially reduce violence in our schools and ensure that schools become safer places to learn.

In closing, I also want to note the importance of authorizing consistent funding for the SDFSCA above recent appropriations levels. State and local education authorities need sufficient funding to make these vital programs work effectively on behalf of children. By providing the necessary funding for SDFSCA and passing the Safe Schools Improvement Act, Congress can take a critical step in ensuring school safety through preventing bulling and harassment.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony and for addressing this important problem. We look forward to working with you throughout the reauthorization process and would be pleased to provide any additional information you and your staff may require.

Prepared Statement of the Girl Scouts of the USA

Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) is the world's preeminent organization dedicated solely to girls, serving 2.7 million girl members and 900,000 adult members in every corner of the United States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and ninety-five countries worldwide. Girl Scouts has a longstanding commitment to the well-being of girls and continues to be an authority on their healthy growth and development. As Congress confronts the problem of relational aggression and other forms of bullying

among its youth, Girl Scouts can assist policymakers in improving how we promote the health and safety of young people, especially girls.

The toll of relational aggression

School safety is a significant and serious concern for students, parents, teachers, policymakers and the general public. Unfortunately, public perception and media attention is often dominated by physical safety concerns: school shootings, physical violence, drug and alcohol-abuse, gang activity, sexual assault and theft. While these are certainly important issues, they overshadow the safety issues that concern the vast majority of our nation's girls: threats to their emotional safety.

In our groundbreaking original research report Feeling Safe, the Girl Scouts Research Institute found that nearly half of all girls (46 percent) defined safety as not having their feelings hurt. Moreover, girls' number one concern (32 percent) was a fear of being teased or made fun of. Girls view their safety as a combination of physical and emotional security.

Relational aggression is one of the most significant threats to girls' emotional well being. Relational aggression encompasses behaviors that harm others by damaging, threatening, or manipulating a child's relationship with her peers or by injuring a peer's feeling of social acceptance.[i] This includes starting rumors, gossiping, encouraging others to reject or exclude another, taunting and teasing, name calling and other forms of social isolation. Cyberbullying—another form of relational aggression—is similar to other types of bullying, except it takes place online and through text messages sent to cell phones, interactive and digital technologies.[ii] Cyber Bullying allows perpetrators to mistreat their peers more cruelly than they usually would without having to see the immediate responses to their behavior. Bullying takes many forms, but girls are more likely to use this subtle, indirect and emotional form of aggression than boys.[iii]

Relational aggression is as problematic, if not more of a threat, than traditional bullying and harassment. Relational aggression can interfere with a girl's ability to reach her full potential, to make decisions and can damage her self-confidence. Victims of relational aggression are more likely to experience loneliness, depression, anxiety, and poor school performance.[iv] The perpetrators are at a higher risk for future delinquency, crime, and substance abuse.[v]

Girl Scouts programming

Fortunately, the impact of relational aggression can be mitigated through strong school safety policies and prevention programs. Girl Scout councils across the country play a critical role in raising girls' awareness of and capacity to combat relational aggression. For example, the Girl Scouts of Nassau County (NY) partnered with the Ophelia Project[vi] to deliver a series of workshops for girls to enhance their ability to empathize with and support each other. The program is designed to give girls the tools they need to decide for themselves what their roles and responsibilities are in a healthy relationship. Federal school safety policy should support these types of community efforts to encourage prevention and mitigation of relational aggression.

Policy recommendations

Girl Scouts believes that policy solutions should embrace an all-encompassing approach to improving school safety. Creating programs that focus solely on the prevention of physical harm will not suffice; Congress must support more holistic programs that address both emotional and physical security. Specifically, Girl Scouts recommends programs and policy that:

- Build confidence among girls, empowering them to prevent relational aggression before it starts and to stop it when they see it.
- Support community-based organizations that prevent relational aggression teach about healthy relationships, including the Girl Scouts.
- Encourage schools to adopt and strengthen policies to prevent and address relational aggression.
- Educate parents, teachers, administrators, and other school personnel in recognizing, preventing, and mitigating the effects of relational aggression.

Girl Scouts of the USA supports H.R. 2262, the Safe Schools Improvement Act, because it lays the foundation for creating safe environments for America's children and promotes safe school environments. Further, we support strengthening this legislation to more directly address the serious threat posed by relational aggression.

GSUSA's Public Policy and Advocacy Office, located in Washington, D.C., works in partnership with local Girl Scout councils to educate representatives of the legislative and executive branches of government and advocate for public policy issues important to girls and Girl Scouting. For further information please contact Sharon Pearce, Director of Public Policy at 202-659-3780 or *advocacy@girlscouts.org*.

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[vi] The Ophelia Project serves youth and adults who are affected by relational and other non-physical forms of aggression by providing them with a unique combination of tools, strategies and solutions. The Ophelia Project helps to build capabilities to measurably reduce aggression and promote a positive, productive environment for all.

Prepared Statement of Joe Solmonese, President, Human Rights Campaign

Chairman Kildee, Chairwoman McCarthy and Members of the Subcommittees: My name is Joe Solmonese, and I am the President of the Human Rights Campaign, America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) equality. By inspiring and engaging all Americans, HRC strives to end discrimination against LGBT citizens and realize a nation that achieves fundamental fairness and equality for all. On behalf of our over 750,000 members and supporters nationwide, I thank you for holding this important hearing and am honored to submit this statement regarding the critical need to address school safety and bullying prevention for LGBT youth.

The Human Rights Campaign supports measures that prohibit discrimination, including bullying and harassment, against students because they are, or are perceived to be, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Schools should be supportive and nurturing places where all students can learn and grow. But for too many LGBT youth, they are places filled with name-calling, ostracism, and violence. Left unchecked, such environments can lead to tragedy, as in the cases of California middle school student Lawrence King, who died in 2008 at the hands of a classmate who objected to his sexual orientation and gender expression, and of Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover, an eleven-year-old student in Massachusetts who took his own life earlier this year after suffering months of anti-gay bullying, and whose mother is before you today to share her story.

School officials must have the tools, as well as the responsibility, to prevent future tragedies, protect LGBT students and maintain and safe places for all of our nation's youth. The Safe Schools Improvement Act, H.R. 2262, would provide public school administrators with that critical guidance and protect all students against bullying and harassment. I urge Members to take the lessons learned from today's hearing and work to pass this critical legislation.

Bullying Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity is Widespread

While bullying impacts students of every background, LGBT youth face some of the most severe and pervasive abuse. In its biennial National School Climate Survey, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) has documented the disturbing scope of this problem. In the 2007 Survey, nearly 90 percent of LGBT students reported experiencing verbal harassment and nearly half (44%) also experiencing physical harassment and almost a quarter (22%) suffering physical assault. Over 60 percent of those students reported feeling unsafe in school because of their sexual orientation and nearly 40 percent felt unsafe because of their gender expression.

Just this month, the National Education Association released "A Report on the Status of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender People in Education: Stepping Out of the Closet, into the Light," a comprehensive assessment which similarly documents the severity of bullying facing LGBT students. For example, the report cites a study by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education demonstrating that gay and bisexual young men are threatened at school at alarming rates—over 20 percent more than their heterosexual peers.

It is unacceptable that any young person experience fear and violence in school. The evidence clearly demonstrates that LGBT students are particularly vulnerable to bullying and efforts to make schools safer for all youth must take into account the pervasive harassment and violence that centers on students' real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity.

Bullying Harms Academic Performance and Puts LGBT Youth at Risk

The consequences of bullying are not simply bruised feelings and bruised bodies. Studies show that LGBT students who experience harassment at school have poorer academic performance, increased truancy and a higher risk of suicide. For example, the Massachusetts study cited in the NEA's report shows that lesbian and gay students who are threatened with violence are less than half as likely to be getting passing grades. The same study shows that lesbian and gay youth attempt suicide at a rate three to four times that of their heterosexual peers, and that those who experience physical threats are nearly three times more likely to attempt suicide than those who do not. Today's testimony by Sirdeaner Walker, and the stories of students like Lawrence King and Jaheem Herrera, are further compelling evidence that bullying can lead to the most dire of consequences.

However, the evidence also shows us that school policies and programs that protect and support LGBT students have a positive impact on their lives and their academic performance. That same Massachusetts study found that lesbian and gay students who attended a school with an LGBT-inclusive policy on bullying and harassment were more than three and a half times more likely to get As and Bs.

It is crucial that schools have policies, training and resources that make LGBT students feel safe and school officials able to address bullying and its consequences. That is why mainstream education groups—including American Association of School Administrators, American Federation of Teachers, American School Health Association, National Association of School Psychologists, National Education Association and National Parent Teacher Association—support federal legislation that would require schools to have bullying and harassment policies that protect all students, including LGBT youth.

Conclusion

Harassment of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students is unacceptable, and violence against them is unconscionable. Yet, every day, young people across the nation experience epithets, threats, exclusion and physical assault in the classrooms and hallways. Their grades suffer, they skip school, and, sometimes they take their own lives. Congress must act to protect these vulnerable young people and ensure that all students can learn and grow without fear that they will be targeted simply for who they are.

Prepared Statement of Kate Kendell, Esq., Executive Director, National Center for Lesbian Rights

I am pleased to submit this written testimony for the Hearing on Strengthening School Safety Through Prevention of Bullying, and to express our deep appreciation to Chairman Kildee and Chairwoman McCarthy, along with Ranking Members Castle and Platts, and members of the Committee for holding this crucial hearing on addressing bullying and harassment in schools. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the National Center for Lesbian Rights and the thousands of youth affected by this serious problem.

The National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) is a national legal organization committed to advancing the civil and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people and their families through litigation, public policy advocacy, and public education. NCLR is headquartered in San Francisco and maintains a regional office in Washington, D.C. NCLR has worked extensively on issues affecting LGBT youth, specifically addressing safety in schools. Since 1993, NCLR's Youth Project has worked to ensure that all LGBT young people are safe and can live openly with the support they need to reach their full potential by: providing free legal information to youth, legal advocates, and activists; advocating for policies and legislation to protect and support LGBT students; presenting workshops and developing training materials for schools on legal protections for LGBT youth; and litigating cases that establish legal protections for LGBT youth in schools.

We strongly urge Congress to address issues of student bullying and harassment by requiring schools and districts to enact anti-bullying and harassment policies that include sexual orientation and gender identity as enumerated categories. These protections are essential to ensure that all students, regardless of their background or characteristics, are provided a safe environment in which to learn.

Unfortunately, studies consistently demonstrate that LGBT youth face disproportionately high levels of harassment and discrimination in schools across the country. According to the 2007 National School Climate Survey of a sample of 6,209 LGBT students, nearly three-quarters of students heard homophobic remarks often or frequently at school. Verbal harassment was directed at 86.2% of the students because

of their sexual orientation, and at 66.5% of the students because of their gender expression. Harassment reported by transgender youth was even more severe, with almost 90% of transgender students reporting verbal harassment in the past school year. Additionally, almost half of all the students surveyed had been physically harassed at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation, and 30.4% of students because of their gender expression. This survey also showed that a majority of students do not report the harassment to school officials or parents, and nearly a third of the students who did report an incident said that school staff did nothing in response. Joseph G. Kosciw & Elizabeth M. Diaz, 2007 National School Climate Survey, available at *http://www.glsen.org/binary-data/GLSEN—ATTACHMENTS/file/000/001/1290-1.pdf.*

Left unaddressed, this kind of harassment and discrimination can have serious consequences for youth. Hostile school environments can increase a student's sense of isolation and lower his or her self-esteem to the point that the student may drop out of school or engage in other dangerous or self-destructive behaviors. For instance, LGBT students who reported that they were often or frequently harassed in school were more likely to report that they do not plan to pursue a college education and that they have missed days of school due to safety concerns. 2007 National School Climate Survey. More drastic consequences include abuse of alcohol or other drugs, running away from home, and suicide. Michael Bochenek and A. Widney Brown, Hatred in the hallways: Violence and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students in U.S. schools, available at *http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/2001/uslgbt/Final-05.htm#P661—102092.*

Earlier this year, two eleven-year-old boys, Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover in Massachusetts and Jaheem Herrera in Georgia, committed suicide after suffering anti-gay harassment and bullying in their schools. Carl's mother had approached school officials about the harassment her son was experiencing, but received no assistance in addressing the problem. In addition to these two young boys, suicides of at least three other middle-school aged children have been linked to bullying since January. It is vital that Congress take action to require schools and districts to enact anti-bullying and harassment policies that address sexual orientation and gender identity so that all young people can have a safe place to learn.

Current law recognizes that all students have a federal constitutional right to equal protection. Schools have a duty to protect all students from harassment, regardless of whether the school has a policy that prohibits harassment and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression. Courts have held that schools are liable for failing to provide equal protection if school officials refuse to take action against anti-LGBT harassment. See Nabozny v. Podlesny, 92 F.3d 446 (7th Cir. 1996). Additionally, Title IX of the Education Amendment Acts of 1972 prohibits discrimination based on sex in education programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. One of the forms of prohibited conduct under Title IX is discrimination on the basis of gender non-conformity. See, e.g., Montgomery v. Independent Sch. Dist. No. 709, 109 F.Supp. 2d 1081 (D. Minn. 2000).

However, despite these legal obligations to protect LGBT youth, the continuing, pervasive harassment faced by LGBT youth demonstrates the law does not adequately prevent harassment based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity. The most effective way to protect these students is to adopt and implement laws and policies that explicitly prohibit discrimination and harassment on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. The existence of anti-bullying and anti-harassment laws that specifically enumerate sexual orientation and gender identity ensures that everyone—staff, faculty, students, and the community—is aware that this type of conduct is unacceptable. As the Supreme Court has explained, "[e]numeration is the essential device used to make the duty not to discriminate concrete and to provide guidance for those who must comply." Romer v. Evans, 517 U.S. 620, 627 (1996).

Establishing clear procedures for responding to complaints is also essential in order to effectively address harassment and bullying. See Inclusion of Enumerated Categories in Safe School Legislation/Policies: A Policy Tool from GLSEN and NCLR, available at *http://www.nclrights.org/site/DocServer/inclusion.pdf?docID=1681.* As explained above, a large percentage of harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity goes unreported. Clear complaint procedures encourage students to report harassment to their schools.

Members of the National Safe Schools Partnership have proposed legislative language, HR 2262 (The Safe Schools Improvement Act) that would require, as a condition of receiving federal funding, that states, districts, and schools have policies in place that prohibit bullying and harassment. It would also require schools and districts to establish complaint procedures to effectively respond to instances of harassment in a manner that is both timely and results in educationally appropriate reso-

lutions for students who are victims of bullying or harassment. This legislation would further require states to include information regarding bullying and harassment in their required drug and violence prevention reports.

This proposed legislative language would also allow states, districts and schools to use funding under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act to provide professional development regarding strategies to prevent bullying and harassment and to effectively intervene when such incidents occur and implement student education programs designed to teach students about the issues around, and consequences of, bullying and harassment.

This legislation is in line with the recommended effective strategies for protecting youth who experience harassment based on a characteristic, such as gender identity or sexual orientation. This protection is vital to the prevention of violence and harassment of LGBT youth. As Chairwoman McCarthy stated in her opening remarks at the Joint Subcommittee Hearing: "It is a parent's worst nightmare to send a child to school only to learn that the child has become a victim of a crime or other incident * * * [w]e see acts of bullying that quickly escalate into outbreaks of violence." Opening Statement of Rep. McCarthy at Joint Subcommittee Hearing: Strengthening School Safety Through Prevention of Bullying, available at *http://edlabor.house.gov/hearings/2009/07/strengthening-schoolsafety-th.shtml.*

For all of these reasons, that NCLR urges Congress to act as soon as possible to ensure the safety of our communities and our children, especially those students who are most frequently targeted by harassment and bullying. Please accept my deep appreciation for this opportunity to present testimony on this important issue.

NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION,
July 7, 2009.

Hon. DALE KILDEE, *Chairman,*
Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education;
Hon. CAROLYN MCCARTHY, *Chairwoman,*
Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities, Committee on Education and Labor, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN KILDEE AND CHAIRWOMAN MCCARTHY: The National School Boards Association (NSBA) representing over 95,000 local school board members across the nation through our state school boards associations is pleased to submit our Statement for The Record to the Joint House Committee for the hearing on "Strengthening School Safety through Prevention of Bullying," scheduled July 8, 2009.

The National School Boards Association (NSBA) believes that students must have safe and supportive climates and learning environments that support their opportunities to learn and that are free of abuse, violence, bullying, weapons, and harmful substances including alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Additionally, NSBA urges federal, state, and local governments, as well as parents, business, and the community, to collaborate with local school boards to eliminate violence and to ensure safe, crime-free schools. Further, NSBA continues to urge local school boards to incorporate into their policies and practices approaches that encourage and strengthen positive student attitudes in, and relationship to, school.

We are pleased that the vast majority of schools takes the issue of bullying seriously and is taking steps to prevent bullying and other forms of violence. According to the Centers for Disease Control School Health Policies and Programs (SHPPS) Study:[1]

85 percent of high schools are required by their districts to teach violence prevention and more than 80 percent of middle and elementary schools are required to do the same.

The vast majority of states and districts provide or offer funding for staff development on violence prevention to health educators and/or mental health/social services staff.

School response to bullying as a specific form of violence is on the rise. During the six-year period from 2000 to 2006, the percentage of elementary schools and middle schools that participated in a program to prevent bullying increased from 63 percent to 77.3 percent.

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[1] "School Health Policies and Programs Study." Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006. Retrieved online: *http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/shpps/2006/factsheets/pdf/FS—ViolencePrevention—SHPPS2006.pdf*

In addition to staff development, many schools are using technology, including surveillance cameras and metal detectors, to monitor student conduct and prevent violence.

NSBA recognizes the critical link between health, safety, and a positive school climate to learning. Bullying and other forms of harassment contribute to fear, low self-esteem and lower academic achievement. Therefore, NSBA supports coordinated efforts at the federal, state, and local levels to protect students, employees and all those who visit school facilities.

In expanding federal efforts to prevent bullying, we urge Congress to take the following actions:

(a) Fully fund the Safe and Drug Free School Program and establish "prevention of bullying" as an allowable use of federal funding when such use would be compatible with the original intent.

(b) Create a clearinghouse of "best practices" and provide technical assistance to local school districts in the design and development of programs to prevent and reduce bullying.

(c) Provide flexibility to local school districts in the application of discipline and/or law enforcement guidelines to prevent unintended consequences that unnecessarily impact students in an adverse manner.

(d) Establish policies that would prohibit the imposition of additional reporting and other requirements on local school districts and states that have no direct impact on the reduction or elimination of incidents of bullying.

(e) Increase the level of federal funding targeted to research and studies aimed at reducing and eliminating incidents of bullying.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this Statement for the Record. Questions concerning our recommendations may be directed to Lucy Gettman, director of federal programs, at 703.838.6763; or by email, lgettman@nsba.org.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL A. RESNICK,
Associate Executive Director.

Members of **THE NATIONAL SAFE SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP**

Bridging the Gap in Federal Law:

Promoting Safe Schools and Improved Student Achievement By Preventing Bullying and Harassment in Our Schools

Almost 30 national education, health care, civil rights, law enforcement, youth development, and other organizations call on Congress to make changes in federal law that will assure that schools and districts maintain sensible anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies, which will have a dramatic impact in improving school safety, and correspondingly, student achievement for all students. This policy brief provides a summary of the research and educational experience that compels Congress to act to help ensure that students do not suffer the adverse consequences associated with bullying and harassment in our nation's schools.

Overview

As national, state, and local leaders continue to invest in America's school systems so that all students, regardless of background, graduate prepared for citizenship, college, and the workforce of the 21st Century, it is imperative that our leaders address all of the challenges we face in reaching this shared goal. The focus on issues of accountability—including, for instance, the development of high learning standards, aligned systems of instruction and assessment, and the like—must extend to *all* issues that indisputably affect student development and achievement. In short, any robust system of accountability should provide direction and support for educators in all critical areas that affect student learning.

This means that as our education leaders work to develop and implement policies that will further improve student learning outcomes, it is imperative that they meaningfully address school safety issues, with a focus on bullying and harassment. The problems of bullying and harassment are among the most prevalent and profound that schools face; they continue to seriously disrupt our school environments and affect the lives of millions of students every year, with major adverse academic and safety consequences. Congress should take steps to ensure that no student is denied access to a quality education based on fear or degradation associated with bullying and harassment.

To this end, members of the National Safe Schools Partnership, a growing coalition of education, health, civil rights, law enforcement, youth development, and other organizations have come together in support of federal policy recommendations based on long-standing research and experience. If adopted, these recommendations will fill an obvious gap in federal law—and will promote school improvement and safety, along with student achievement throughout the country.[1] Specifically, Partnership members recommend that Congress amend federal law to ensure that:

1. Schools and districts have **comprehensive and effective student conduct policies** that include clear prohibitions regarding bullying and harassment;
2. Schools and districts focus on effective **prevention strategies and professional development** designed to help school personnel meaningfully address issues associated with bullying and harassment; and
3. States and districts **maintain and report data** regarding incidents of bullying and harassment in order to inform the development of effective federal, state, and local policies that address these issues.

Despite abundant research and experience that confirms the power of prevention in addressing the short- and long-term consequences of bullying and harassment, and despite the American public's clear and primary concern about school safety, federal law does not comprehensively address the issue. In order for federal law to address the well-established factors that have a direct bearing on student achievement and the success of our schools, Congress must act to help eliminate the safety and achievement problems associated with bullying and harassment.

WHAT IS BULLYING? WHAT IS HARASSMENT?

Historically, bullying and harassment have been defined in different ways, depending on the particular context in which the terms have been used. In general, however, each has been associated with actual harm to individuals defined with reference to the kind of conduct at issue and the setting in which it has occurred. Perhaps most notably, federal non-discrimination laws define prohibited racial and sexual harassment—which can include verbal, as well as physical harassment.

In addition, bullying and harassment represent distinct, but overlapping kinds of conduct. Some instances of abusive or harmful conduct by students may constitute harassment and bullying, while other instances may constitute only one or the other.

National Safe Schools Partnership members have proposed federal legislation that would effectively implement the recommendations contained in this policy paper through amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA] (as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001) through the reauthorization process. That proposed legislation defines bullying and harassment:

- With specific reference to conduct that causes harm to students, defined as conduct that adversely affects one or more students, depriving them of access to educational opportunities or benefits provided by their schools.
- To clarify that it can be based on any grounds set forth by a district or state; and to enumerate specific bases related to the highest frequency of such incidents, including conduct that is based on a student's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religion.
- To exclude any action that would constitute protected free expression.

See Proposed Federal Legislation transmitted on behalf of National Safe School Partnership members to Congress, March 30, 2007 and May 21, 2007 (copies on file with Holland & Knight LLP, Washington, D.C.).

What We Know About Bullying and Harassment

Decades of wide-ranging research and experience confirm a number of indisputable facts that, when taken together, compel Congress to act regarding bullying and harassment:

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT ARE WIDESPREAD PROBLEMS WITH SIGNIFICANT, ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES. **Bullying and harassment directly interfere with student learning and achievement, just as they threaten the safety and well-being of millions of students each year.**[2]

- **Bullying and harassment are pervasive problems in America's schools. Studies consistently demonstrate the breadth of the problem: one national study demonstrates that bullying affects nearly one in every three American schoolchildren in grades six through ten;**[3] **another confirms that harassment in schools is experienced by a majority of students.**[4]

Moreover, incidents of bullying and harassment adversely affect both girls and boys, just as they have negative consequences for students in both lower grades and higher grades.[5]

- "Bullying is serious business…[it] can actually result in long-term social, academic, psychological, and physical consequences."[6] The academic consequences of bullying include decreased interest in school, increased absences, and decreased concentration levels for students. Long-term effects associated with bullies include violent and antisocial behaviors.

- Student behavior—specifically including bullying and other "inappropriate" student behavior—is the most commonly cited problem in schools by middle school students.[7]

PROACTIVE, COMPREHENSIVE EFFORTS BY SCHOOL COMMUNITIES—INCLUDING DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING COMPREHENSIVE POLICIES—MAKE A DIFFERENCE. Research and experience demonstrate that comprehensive and proactive efforts—such as effective policy development and implementation—are likely to be effective in preventing incidents of bullying and harassment. Preventative steps can be taken to raise the consciousness of the school community and to educate teachers, staff, parents, and students regarding the nature of the issues, as well as effective responses, before bullying and harassment become a serious problem.

- Teachers believe that policies prohibiting bullying and harassment are among the most helpful strategies to pursue when working to create safe school environments. Correspondingly, students in schools that have comprehensive harassment policies describe their schools as having a better atmosphere with respect to bullying and harassment. [8]

- By definition, comprehensive policies must:

  - Enumerate bases of such conduct that must be specifically covered because of its prevalence—such as race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and religion;[9] and

  - Permit local judgments regarding additional bases of enumeration, based on local patterns of behavior or concerns.

- Effective anti-bullying programs "require strong leadership and an ongoing commitment from school personnel." Staff development and training are essential elements in sustaining effective anti-bullying programs.[10]

CONSISTENT WITH THE VIEWS OF MOST EDUCATORS, THE AMERICAN PUBLIC IS CONCERNED ABOUT SCHOOL SAFETY AND SUPPORTS PROTECTION FOR ALL STUDENTS. The American public identifies school safety in general—and bullying and/or harassment in particular—as among the public school issues of most concern.[11] Teachers echo this concern: The majority of teachers believe that bullying and harassment are "serious problems" in their schools.[12]

The Gap in Federal Law

Current federal legislation does not comprehensively address the issue of bullying and harassment. A limited number of federal laws do address particular kinds of harassment (most notably based on race, national origin, and sex). However, federal legislation does not prohibit *all* kinds of harassment in schools; and *no federal legislation* specifically prohibits bullying in schools.[13]

In this context, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 does:

- *Permit* states to spend specified amounts on training, technical assistance, and demonstration projects to address violence that is associated with prejudice and intolerance; and
- *Condition* certain funding to school districts upon their written assurance that they (or the schools to be served) have a plan for keeping schools safe and drug-free that includes "appropriate and effective school discipline policies that prohibit disorderly conduct" and "a code of conduct policy for all students that clearly states the responsibilities of students, teachers and administrators in maintaining a classroom environment that," among other things, "allows all students in the class to learn" and "has consequences that are fair and developmentally appropriate."[14]

Recommendations to Bridge the Gap in Federal Law

Schools and districts throughout the country have student conduct codes that describe and prohibit certain conduct (such as carrying weapons, the use of profanity, etc.), along with the consequences associated with a violation of those prohibitions. In order to comply with long-standing federal law, schools and districts must also include in their conduct codes specific prohibitions and grievance procedures associated with certain forms of harassment.

The recommendations endorsed by the National Safe Schools Partnership members (listed below) build on common practice and existing federal requirements. These recommendations do not advance radical or dramatic changes to school and district policies. Instead, they bridge the gap that exists under federal law—which, in too many cases, schools and districts have not addressed. Implementation of these recommendations will have a dramatic, positive impact on the lives of thousands of students annually—helping them achieve academic (and ultimately professional) success in a safe and secure school environment.

1. **Federal law should ensure that schools and districts have comprehensive and effective student conduct policies that include clear prohibitions against bullying and harassment;**
2. **Federal law should ensure that schools and districts focus on effective prevention strategies and professional development designed to help school personnel meaningfully address issues associated with bullying and harassment; and**
3. **Federal law should ensure that states and districts maintain and report data regarding incidents of bullying and harassment in order to inform the development of effective federal, state, and local policies that address these issues.**

Congress can take a critical step toward promoting school safety and enhancing student achievement throughout the country by enacting these recommendations.

Broad-Based Support for Recommendations

Almost 30 organizations—representative of constituencies in education, health, civil rights, law enforcement, youth development, and other areas—have joined together in support for federal legislation that would reflect these recommendations.[15] They include:

1. AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
   The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) is the professional organization for over 13,000 educational leaders across America and in many other countries. AASA's mission is to support and develop effective school system leaders who are dedicated to the highest quality public education for all children.

2. AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
   The American Federation of Teachers (AFT), AFL-CIO, with more than 1.3 million members, works to strengthen the institutions in which AFT members work, to improve the quality of their services.

3. AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
   The American Library Association is the oldest and largest library association in the world, with more than 64,000 members. Its mission to promote the highest quality library and information services and public access to information.

4. AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION
   The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) supports school counselors' efforts to help students focus on academic, personal/social and career development so they achieve success in school and are prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of society. ASCA serves more than 20,000 professional school counselors around the world.

5. AMERICAN COUNSELING ASSOCIATION
   The American Counseling Association (ACA) is a not-for-profit professional and educational organization dedicated to the growth and enhancement of the counseling profession. Founded in 1952, ACA is the world's largest association exclusively representing professional counselors in various practice settings, serving nearly 45,000 members.

6. AMERICAN SCHOOL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
   The American School Health Association is an organization of administrators, counselors, health educators, physical educators, psychologists, school health coordinators, school nurses, school physicians, and social workers. Its mission is to protect and promote the health and well-being of children and youth through coordinated school health programs as a foundation for school success.

7. BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF AMERICA
   Brothers Big Sisters of America is the oldest and largest youth mentoring organization in the United States. In 2006, the organization served more than 246,000 youth, ages five through 18, in 5,000 communities across the country through a network of 425 agencies.

8. COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS, INC.
   Communities In Schools is anchor to the nation's leading community-based organization helping young people stay in school and prepare for life. Each year, more than two million young people in 27 states and the District of Columbia have access to services through Communities In Schools, through its 200 local affiliates in 27 states.

9. COUNCIL FOR CHILDREN WITH BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS
   The Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders is the division of the Council for Exceptional Children committed to promoting and facilitating the education and general welfare of children and youth with emotional or behavioral disorders.

10. FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS
    Fight Crime: Invest in Kids is a bipartisan, nonprofit anti-crime organization led by more than 3,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, victims of violence and leaders of police officer associations.

11. THE GAY, LESBIAN AND STRAIGHT EDUCATION NETWORK
    The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) is an education organization dedicated to ensuring safe schools for all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students. With over forty local chapters, GLSEN strives to ensure that each member of every K-12 school community is valued and respected regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.

12. HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN
    The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) is America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender equality. By inspiring and engaging all Americans, and with a membership of over 700,000, HRC strives to end discrimination against GLBT citizens and realize a nation that achieves fundamental fairness and equality for all.

13. LEADERSHIP AND RENEWAL OUTFITTERS
    Leadership and Renewal Outfitters is a national not-for-profit organization focused on creating, inspiring, and renewing opportunities for leaders and their organizations by grounding people in who they are; connecting people to each other; and inspiring people's beliefs about what they can actually do to positively impact the lives of young people.

14. LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
    Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA) is the largest non-profit volunteer organization advocating for individuals with learning disabilities and has over 200 state and local affiliates in 42 states and Puerto Rico. LDA's international membership of over 15,000 includes members from 27 countries around the world.

15. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH
    The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) is a national grassroots membership association that serves as the voice and the social conscience for the education of children and youth in homeless situations. NAEHCY connects educators, parents, advocates, researchers, and service providers to ensure school enrollment and attendance, and overall success for children and youth whose lives have been disrupted by the lack of safe, permanent, and adequate housing.

16. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS
    The National Association of School Psychologists, with a membership of 23,000, represents and supports school psychology through leadership to enhance the mental health and educational competence of all children.

17. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
    The National Association of Secondary School Principals is the preeminent organization of and national voice for middle level and high school principals, assistant principals, and aspiring school leaders from across the United States and more than 45 countries around the world. It has 33,000 members.

18. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE DIRECTORS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
The National Association of State Directors of Special Education is an organization dedicated to providing services to state education agencies to maximize educational outcomes for children with disabilities.

19. NATIONAL CENTER FOR LESBIAN RIGHTS
The National Center for Lesbian Rights is a non-profit, public interest law firm that advocates for equitable public policies affecting LGBT community, provides free legal assistance to LGBT clients and their legal advocates, and conducts community education on LGBT legal issues.

20. NATIONAL COLLABORATION FOR YOUTH
The National Collaboration for Youth (NCY), a 30-year old organization, is a coalition of organizations that have a significant interest in youth development focused on a mission of providing a united voice as advocates for youth to improve the conditions of young people in America, in order to help young people reach their full potential. Members of NCY include fifty national, non-profit, youth development organizations.

21. NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA
The National Council of La Raza, the largest national constituency-based Hispanic organization and the leading voice in Washington, DC for the Hispanic community, is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization established to reduce poverty and discrimination and improve life opportunities for Hispanic Americans.

22. NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
The National Education Association (NEA) is the nation's largest professional employee organization and is committed to advancing the cause of public education. NEA's 2.7 million members work at every level of education, from pre-school to university graduate programs.

23. THE NATIONAL NETWORK FOR YOUTH
The National Network for Youth is a 30-year old national non-profit membership and advocacy organization that provides education, networking, training, materials and policy work with federal, state, and local lawmakers. The mission of the National Network for Youth is to champion the needs of runaway, homeless, and other disconnected youth through advocacy, innovation and services – one community at a time.

24. NATIONAL PTA
The largest volunteer child advocacy association in the nation, representing 5.5 million parents, teachers, students, and other child advocates, National PTA reminds our country of its obligations to children an provides parents and families with a powerful voice to speak on behalf of every child while providing the best tools for parents to help their children be successful students.

25. SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
The School Social Work Association of America is dedicated to promoting the profession of School Social Work and the professional development of School Social Workers in order to address barriers to learning and enhance the educational experience of students and their families.

26. SIKH AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION FUND
The Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund is a national civil rights and educational organization. The group empowers Sikh Americans through legal assistance, educational outreach, legislative advocacy, and media relations.

27. SOCIETY OF STATE DIRECTORS OF HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECREATION
The Society aims to have a significant and enduring effect on the health, achievement, and life success of children and youth through school health education and physical education within a coordinated school health approach. The Society utilizes strategic advocacy, creative partnerships, state-of-the-art professional development, and timely identification of resources to enhance the leadership capacity of its members.

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ENDNOTES

[1] This document is published on behalf of members of the National Safe Schools Partnership that have recommended that Congress enact federal law consistent with the principles discussed herein. The Partnership is an informal coalition of leading education, health, civil rights, law enforcement, youth development, and other groups committed to ensuring that America's schools are safe for all children.

[2] See, e.g., American Association of University Women, *Hostile Hallways: Bullying, Teasing, and Sexual Harassment in School* (2001);

[3] U.S. Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, *Bullying Prevention in the School: Research-Based Strategies for Educators* (2003), *citing* National Institute of Child and Heath and Human Development, *Health Behaviour in School-aged Children: A World Health Organization Cross-National Study?Research Protocol for the 1997-98 Survey* (1998).

[4] Harris Interactive, GLSEN, *From Teasing to Torment: School Climate in America* (2005)

[5] See U.S. Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, *Bullying Prevention in the School: Research-Based Strategies for Educators* (2003); American Association of University Women, *Hostile Hallways: Bullying, Teasing, and Sexual Harassment in School* (2001); Devoe et al., U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, *Indicators of School Crime and Safety*. 2002, NCES 20003-009/NCJ 196753 (Washington, D.C. 2002).

[6] U.S. Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, *Bullying Prevention in the School: Research-Based Strategies for Educators* (2003). *See also* Nansel et al., *Bullying Behaviors Among U.S. Youth: Prevalence and Association with Psychosocial Adjustment*, 285 Journal of the American Medical Association 2094 (2001); American Association of University Women, *Hostile Hallways: Bullying, Teasing, and Sexual Harassment in School* (2001).

[7] National Association of Secondary School Principals and Phi Delta Kappa International, Middle School Student Poll (May, 2007).

[8] Harris Interactive, GLSEN, *From Teasing to Torment: School Climate in America* (2005).

[9] Comprehensive policies with enumeration help ensure safety and reduce absenteeism; and promote environments with fewer incidents of reported harassment. See Harris Interactive, GLSEN, *From Teasing to Torment: School Climate in America* (2005). Correspondingly, enumeration facilitates more responsive teacher and staff interventions when bullying and harassment occurs. Indeed, the U.S. Supreme Court has recognized that "[e]numeration is the essential device used to make the duty not to discriminate concrete and to provide guidance for those who must comply." *Romer v. Evans*, 517 U.S. 620 (1996).

[10] See U.S. Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, *Bullying Prevention in the School: Research-Based Strategies for Educators* (2003); *see also* National Association of State Boards of Education, *Bullying in Schools*, 11 Policy Update No.10, (June 2003).

[11] *See, e.g.*, Massachusetts Department of Education, *2001 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results* (September 2002); American Association of University Women, *Hostile Hallways: Bullying, Teasing, and Sexual Harassment in School* (2001).

[12] Harris Interactive, GLSEN, *From Teasing to Torment: School Climate in America* (2005).

[13] Current federal laws prohibit harassment based on:

- Race, color and national origin (*see Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and "Racial Incidents and Harassment Against Students at Educational Institutions: Investigative Guidance: Notice,"* 59 Fed. Reg. 11448 (March 10, 1994));
- Sex (*see Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq. and "Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance: Harassment of Students by School Employees, Other Students, or Third Parties," 66 Fed. Reg. 5512 (January 19, 2001)*); and
- Disability (*see Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. §794; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. §12134; and "Dear Colleague Letter" from U.S. Department of Education, dated July 25, 2000*).

[14] See 20 U.S.C. §§7114-7115 (2002).

[15] Two legislative proposals—nearly identical in substance—have been submitted to Congress. One would implement the recommendations of this paper through amendments to Title IV of the ESEA, Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities; the other would implement the recommendations of this paper through amendments to Title IX of ESEA. Organizations listed in this document have endorsed one or both of those proposals. Details regarding other endorsing organizations and the specific positions of all endorsing organizations are on file with Holland & Knight LLP, Washington, D.C.

Prepared Statement of Jody Huckaby, Executive Director, PFLAG National

On behalf of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) National's over 200,000 members and supporters, we thank you for allowing us to submit written testimony supporting the Safe Schools Improvement Act of 2009—HR 2262—and urge the Congress to focus on the issues of student bullying and harassment in promoting safe schools for all students. We would also like to thank Chairman Kildee and Chairwoman McCarthy, along with Ranking Members Castle and Platts for convening the hearing Strengthening School Safety through Prevention of Bullying before the United States House of Representatives Education Committee, Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education and Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities. It is absolutely critical for the Subcommittee to discuss the important role of preventing bullying in an effort to create safer schools.

Problem Statement and Background Information

Our nation's schools face longstanding challenges in preventing and effectively responding to instances of bullying and harassment. The U.S. Department of Education has noted this problem and recognized that bullying and harassment "affects nearly one in every three American school children in grades six through ten." Bullying and harassment interfere with a student's ability to achieve high standards. Bullying and harassment have a significant impact on GPAs, school attendance, dropout rates, and likelihood of obtaining a post-secondary education. Research shows that nearly one in eleven students missed a class or a day of school because they felt unsafe. And we know that bullying and harassment can lead to even greater school safety problems. Many high profile cases of school violence—as well as incidents that are less noted—have been attributed to students who were bullied and harassed in school.

Bullying and harassment, whether based on real or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, religion, gender identity or any other characteristic, interfere with a student's ability to learn. A recent study commissioned by GLSEN and conducted by Harris Interactive found that physical appearance, sexual orientation (actual or perceived), and gender expression are the most common reasons for bullying and harassment in our nation's schools (39 percent, 33 percent and 28 percent respectively). The same study noted that only 36 percent of students who attend schools without enumerated anti-bullying and harassment policies report that they feel safe and 16 percent are likely to skip a class because they feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

According to the 2001 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey, three percent of high school students describe themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT). As a minority population in schools across the country, LGBT youth commonly experience high rates of discrimination and harassment, yet are often not protected under school policy. And even though most parents favor teaching about sexual orientation and gender identity in schools, most sexuality education programs do not cover this topic and abstinence-only-until-marriage programs merely further negative sentiment toward these students. As a result, LGBT youth are more vulnerable to a variety of harmful behaviors, including skipping school and attempting suicide, than their heterosexual peers.

Current Gaps in Federal Law

Although a limited number of federal laws address certain kinds of harassment, they do not prohibit all kinds of harassment in schools, and no federal law specifically prohibits bullying in schools. Therefore, the enactment of more comprehensive safe schools policies will fill a troubling gap in federal education policy—to ensure that all students, regardless of their background or characteristics, are provided a safe environment in which to learn.

The problems of bullying and harassment are among the most prevalent and profound that schools face; they continue to seriously disrupt our school environments and affect the lives of millions of students every year, with major adverse academic and safety consequences. Congress should take steps to ensure that no student is denied access to a quality education based on fear or degradation associated with bullying and harassment.

A Model Policy that Ensures All Students are Protected

A model policy should protect students, teachers, employees and staff from both harassment and discrimination by explicitly listing the categories of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression for protection, in addition to pre-existing categories like race, religion, class, ethnicity, etc. Additionally, a model bill should protect individuals based on their "actual or perceived" sexual orientation and gender identity or expression as well as protect individuals from discrimination based on their association with any person who falls into one of the protected categories. This component would protect students with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) parents, siblings or friends.

What is enumeration?

When a law enumerates categories, it specifically lists the types of individuals or things that have to be protected by the policy. For example, the Iowa Safe Schools bill that passed in 2007 (SF 61) establishes a state policy that school employees, volunteers, and students in Iowa schools shall not engage in harassing or bullying behavior. The bill defines harassment and bullying, requires public and non-public schools to adopt such a policy and encourages them to develop programs regarding anti-harassment and anti-bullying. The bill also requires the collection and reporting of data. The enumerated language states that the protected classes, "includes

but is not limited to age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status."

Enumeration does not provide special privileges to any one group. It is essential in protecting ALL students as research has consistently shown that students experience less bullying and harassment and feel safer overall in a school with an enumerated policy.

Why is enumeration important?

When schools, school districts and states have generic anti-bullying policies (one that do not enumerate the protected classes) LGBT students easily fall through the cracks. GLSEN research has shown that students in states with generic laws are no more protected from bullying than students who live in states without any anti-bullying and harassment laws (40.8 percent w/ generic policies vs. 39.8 percent w/ no policies report 'often or frequently' hearing verbal harassment based on sexual orientation) and students report less overall harassment when they know their school has a comprehensive policy that includes enumeration.

Enumerated policies more fully protect all students. Students from schools with an enumerated policy report that others are harassed far less often in their school for reasons like their physical appearance (36 percent vs. 52 percent), their sexual orientation (32 percent vs. 43 percent) or their gender expression (26 percent vs. 37 percent). Students whose schools have a policy that specifically includes sexual orientation or gender identity/expression are less likely than other students to report a serious harassment problem at their school (33 percent vs. 44 percent).

We also know that if specific categories are listed then the training and education that is done for students, teachers and staff will include those groups. This is an important part of the follow up that schools must do after the policy is in place. And it provides an opportunity for groups like PFLAG to do the education.

Sample policy:

The [Your School District] School District is committed to providing all students, teachers, employees and staff with a safe and supportive school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with respect.

It is hereby the policy of the [Your School District] School District to prohibit harassment based on real or perceived race, color, religion (creed), national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, or on the basis of association with others identified by these categories. This policy is intended to comply with [Your State] state as well as federal requirements. The School District shall act to investigate all complaints of harassment, formal or informal, verbal or written, and to discipline or take other appropriate action against any member of the school community who is found to have violated this policy.

Model policy of NCLR, National Center for Lesbian Rights

Established anti-harassment policy in the country:

There are 11 states and the District of Columbia that include protection for sexual orientation in a safe schools law which include: California, Connecticut, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin. Only California, the District of Columbia, Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, New Jersey and Vermont also include gender expression.

The Importance of the Safe Schools Improvement Act of 2009

Members of the National Safe Schools Partnership have proposed legislative language, HR 2262, The Safe Schools Improvement Act of 2009, which would require states, districts, and schools to develop policies and programs to prevent and appropriately respond to instances of bullying and harassment as a condition of receiving federal funding. This proposal would require the following:

- Establish Model Policies. States, districts, and schools have in place policies prohibiting bullying and harassment; and
- Develop Complaint Procedures. Schools and districts establish complaint procedures to effectively respond to instances of harassment in a manner that is timely and results in educationally appropriate resolutions for students who are victims of bullying or harassment; and
- Mandate Date Collection. States include information regarding bullying and harassment in their required drug and violence prevention reports.

This proposed legislative language would also allow states, districts and schools to use funding under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act to:

- Offer Cultural Competency Training. Provide professional development regarding strategies to prevent bullying and harassment and how to effectively intervene when such incidents occur; and

• Create and Execute Student Education Programs. Implement student education programs designed to teach students about the issues around, and consequences of, bullying and harassment.

PFLAG's Unique Role

PFLAG seeks to promote the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends through: support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

PFLAG's remains committed to promoting the health and well-being of LGBT individuals as part of the school community by addressing unchecked bullying and harassment. That is why so many PFLAG parents, families and friends, whose own loved ones have endured similar bullying and harassment, continue to work in their local communities to identify innovative ways to curb such inappropriate behavior and protect young people at school.

Through PFLAG's Cultivating Respect Safe Schools Training Program, our members have been working to address this issue. Their experiences highlight some of the critical needs and missed opportunities that can help in informing congressional efforts aimed at addressing this epidemic. In addition, many of our chapter leaders are currently educating their communities on how to effectively report incidents of bullying and harassment so that the cases get appropriately investigated by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights.

It is our hope the leadership of the U.S. Congress will bring much needed visibility to the problems of bullying and harassment and the fatal consequences that often result when left unchecked. We encourage you to meet with PFLAG members and supporters along with our staff members in our national office who continue to help young people survive persistent bullying and harassment endured in school. We believe these personal accounts will be enormously helpful in your efforts to make a difference in the lives of young people.

Again, we thank you for holding this important hearing and allowing us to submit a written testimony supporting The Safe Schools Improvement Act of 2009. On behalf of all of our members and supporters, we are grateful for your dedicated work in helping create safer schools for all students, including efforts to address the problems of bullying and harassment. If you have any questions related to our ongoing work, please be sure to contact our Field and Policy Manger, Rhodes Perry at 202-467-8180 x 221 or rperry@pflag.org.

Prepared Statement of the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)

The Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF) offers gratitude to Chairman Kildee, Chairwoman McCarthy, and Ranking Members Castle and Platts for convening this hearing and also for the opportunity to submit written testimony for the record.

Founded in 1996, SALDEF is the oldest Sikh American civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States. The Sikh religion was founded in South Asia over 500 years ago by Guru Nanak. There are more than 25 million Sikhs throughout the world and approximately 500,000 adherents of the Sikh religion in the United States. Observant Sikhs are distinguished by dastaars (Sikh turbans), kesh (uncut hair), and other visible articles of faith, and are too often subjected to hate crimes, workplace discrimination, denial of public accommodations, and school bullying because of their actual or perceived race, religion, ethnicity, and national origin. In schools throughout the United States, Sikh American children are teased, threatened, subjected to epithets, and physically assaulted for the simple act of peacefully observing their faith.

• According to a recent survey of Sikh American students in the Queens borough of New York City, more than 75 percent of Sikh American boys reported being teased or harassed because of their Sikh identity.[1] Even in the highly diverse public schools of New York City, Sikh American students are subjected to incendiary slurs, such as "terrorist"; "raghead"; "diaperhead"; and "Bin Laden."[2] The prevalence of

[1] Sikh Coalition, Hatred in the Hallways: A Preliminary Report on Bias Against Sikh Students in New York City's Public Schools 5 (2007)

[2] Id. at 4.

post-9/11 bias among students in our public schools is disconcerting because it implies that such bias is widespread among parents and being transmitted—like a disease—to our nation's children.

• In May 2007, Harpal Singh Vacher, a 15-year-old Sikh American student, was attacked in a bathroom at Newtown High School in Queens, New York. As another student kept watch by the bathroom door, an assailant held Harpal down, ripped off his turban, and forcibly cut his hair. Police officials called the attack a hate crime.[3]

• In May 2008, during a routine fire drill at Hightstown High School in Mercer County, New Jersey, a Sikh American student's turban was set on fire by a fellow student.[4]

• In June 2008, Jagmohan Singh Premi—a high school student in Queens, New York—suffered a facial fracture after being punched in the face by a classmate who was armed with a set of keys and who had attempted to forcibly remove Jagmohan's turban.[5] For several months prior to the attack, the assailant had harassed Jagmohan, pulled his beard, and called him a "terrorist."[6]

These are not theoretical concerns. For the Sikh American community, The Safe Schools Improvement Act promises much-needed progress in the cause of ensuring that all students are provided a safe environment in which to learn. As a member organization of the National Safe Schools Partnership, SALDEF believes that comprehensive bullying prevention programs are prerequisites for safe schools. Congress should require states, districts, and schools to develop policies and programs to prevent and appropriately respond to instances of bullying and harassment as a condition of receiving federal funding. Such policies should specifically enumerate the protected categories and traits on the basis of which students are bullied and harassed. In addition, Congress should enable states, districts, and schools to use funding under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act to not only cultivate professional development programs aimed at combating bullying and harassment but also implement student education programs designed to teach students about the nature and consequences of bullying and harassment.

The Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund strongly supports The Safe Schools Improvement Act. We appreciate your consideration of this important issue, as well as the opportunity to submit written testimony for this hearing.

Prepared Statement of Luis Sierra, Special Projects Manager, Youth Crime Watch of America, Inc.

First of all, we would like to thank Chairman Kildee and Chairwoman McCarthy, as well as Ranking Members Castle and Platts for the opportunity to discuss a matter as important as student safety and the prevention of harassment in schools. It is an issue that everyone must be outspoken about, in order to find the best ways to keep our kids safe in their educational environment.

The Youth Crime Watch of America is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that aims to empower youth to take an active role in making their schools and communities safer. Through our "Watch Out, Help Out" philosophy, we help students in developing youth-led programs that encourage "watch out" activities like crime reporting or youth patrols, as well as "help out" activities such as mentoring or peer mediation. Our goal is to provide crime-free, drug-free environments through a youth-led movement, while instilling positive values, good citizenship, and self confidence in the young people who make a difference to prevent crime, drug use, and violence.

Undoubtedly, bullying has been a major issue in schools in the country, generation after generation. Oftentimes we hear of people who become victims of bullying and harassment because of reasons as simple as their physical appearance, race, sexual orientation, and religion, amongst many others. As a whole, it has turned into bullying due to differences amongst each other—members of our youth have been getting hurt and deaths have occurred, all for the simple fact of being different.

Although federal laws are set to protect people from harassment, we are asking Congress to improve their involvement against bullying and harassment by enacting more comprehensive federal laws, in order to make sure that every single student is provided a safe learning environment. One of the ways in which it should be done is by creating laws that encourage schools to establish anti-harassment policies that enumerate the categories of students prone to being victims of bullying. This makes

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[3] Hate Crime is Charged in Attack on Sikh Boy, N.Y. TIMES, May 26, 2007
[4] Turbans Make Targets, Some Sikhs Find, N.Y. TIMES, June 15, 2008
[5] High school hate crime prompts reform, QUEENS COURIER, June 11, 2008
[6] Fury at New Sikh Teen Attack, N.Y. POST, June 7, 2008

the laws more explicit and straightforward, leaving less up in the air as to what students, faculty and staff can do in response to acts of bullying or harassment. Enumerated policies have been proven to foster a safer school environment, and a bigger peace of mind amongst students in regards to how they are being protected.

Youth and their safety are the main force that has carried the Youth Crime Watch of America forward, which was first established in response to a 12-year old girl who was sexually assaulted in 1979. From that first Youth Crime Watch that was formed here in Miami, we have grown to become an international organization, supporting YCW sites across the nation and in many countries around the globe. We do our best to support youth from elementary school all the way to their college years, regardless of their differences, helping them come together for a safer atmosphere in their schools and communities. We thank you for your efforts in advocating school safety and fairness, and ask you to take further steps to make sure that every student in the nation can have a peaceful, safe, and enjoyable educational career, solidifying our next generation of citizens and leaders.

Prepared Statement of Randi Weingarten, President, American Federation of Teachers

Members of the subcommittees, I am Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers. I am also president of the United Federation of Teachers in New York City. On behalf of the AFT's 1.4 million members, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to present the views of the AFT on the issues of school safety and bullying.

Students, parents, teachers and staff all want the same thing in our schools: a culture of respect and a safe environment. Teaching and learning are enhanced when both are present; conversely, without these factors, teaching and learning are disrupted. Students who are harassed and bullied are more likely to be absent, perform poorly academically and fail to graduate. When teachers and other school staff have to address the disruptive behavior of some students, instructional time is lost for all students. And schools that aren't safe will not attract and retain teachers.

The experience of teachers and other school staff confirms what the research shows: School climate is established and maintained by everyone in the school—from students to teachers to custodial staff to the principal. And each of them needs to understand the detrimental effects of bullying, harassment and violence, and how those issues should be addressed. What happens in one classroom is never just about that classroom; it is a larger statement about the school as a whole.

The AFT advocates for seven essential elements to ensure that schools are safe and orderly environments for everyone:

1. Enact districtwide discipline codes. Engage parents, the community and school staff in the creation of discipline codes. They should use clear, concise language with specific examples of good behavior as well as examples of all behaviors that will result in disciplinary action, and should spell out the specific consequences for code violations. Effective discipline codes will guarantee prompt removal of dangerous and chronically disruptive students from the education environment to an appropriate, high-quality alternative setting.

2. Teach students how to follow the discipline code and ensure that the code is rigorously and fairly enforced. In order to be effective, the discipline code must be a "living document," meaning one that is actively taught to students and is enforced consistently by all school staff, everywhere in the school, and by everyone in the school system.

3. Implement effective classroom management practices. A teacher who has mastered classroom management skills keeps students constructively engaged from the moment they enter the room until the time they leave. The heart of effective classroom management depends on instructional techniques, classroom arrangements, and classroom rules and procedures that are well thought out and mutually supportive. The AFT offers professional development on classroom management to school employees, and it is one of our most popular professional development offerings. This popularity is a testament to the need for more of this type of training from both university-based teacher preparation programs and school districts.

4. Implement programs to modify student misbehavior. There are several programs that aim to correct misbehavior in a consistent and caring manner. The idea behind these programs is that positive behavior must be explicitly taught and reinforced, and that students can self-correct problem behaviors. Also, when students receive behavior interventions at an earlier age, these interventions are more effective than waiting until behavior problems become ingrained.

5. Establish alternative placements that include "wraparound" supports for chronically disruptive and violent students. Different students need different placements. Without a continuum of alternatives, students who are mildly disruptive are treated the same way habitually violent students are treated. For students with severe problems, the placement should link the student and his or her family to community-based social service agencies, law enforcement, courts and corrections agencies, which can join together to create an individually tailored, comprehensive plan for the student.

6. Develop school safety plans. These plans should protect students from dangers that come from outside the school and should be coordinated with outside agencies.

7. Support the work of families, religious institutions and communities in developing sound character traits in children.

As president of the United Federation of Teachers in New York City, I advocated for a school climate survey to be administered to all school staff, parents and, in secondary schools, students. This school climate survey would address perceptions of school safety and respect, including issues such as bullying, order in the hallways, and fair and consistent enforcement of discipline codes. The AFT would like these school climate surveys to be administered throughout the country and incorporated into a redesigned and broader measure of school accountability—one that broadens the measurement of a school's success in preparing its students to be 21st-century citizens.

In addition, AFT local affiliates currently partner with various organizations to stop bullying and harassment and to improve school discipline, safety and student well-being. For example, in New York City, the UFT is partnering with Mayor Bloomberg on the Respect for All initiative. Respect for All provides all students, parents and staff a mechanism for reporting bias-based bullying or intimidation. Each school in New York City now has a designated staff member to whom students can report bullying, and schools are required to report these complaints to the city's Department of Education within 24 hours. This designated staff member is trained to pinpoint issues and access services like counselors and mental health professionals who can help the student being bullied as well as the student doing the bullying.

Another example is in Toledo, Ohio, where our local union is partnering with the school district and the United Way of Greater Toledo Women's Foundation to explicitly teach social and emotional skills in elementary classrooms. This program helps students recognize and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish positive relationships, and handle challenging situations effectively. After two full years of implementation, student attendance has increased, discipline referrals have declined, and suspensions have been reduced significantly. In the classrooms of teachers who had received the most training in social and emotional learning, student achievement rose by one grade level in math and one-half grade level in reading over their counterparts who did not receive such training.

The AFT also has long been a member of the National Safe Schools Partnership, a coalition to advance federal legislation and policy to reduce bullying and harassment. As such, we are strong advocates of H.R. 2262, the Safe Schools Improvement Act, and agree with the recommendation that the provisions of this bill be included in a reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

In addition, we support Rep. Carolyn McCarthy's (D-N.Y.) efforts to make schools safer through the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) Act. The SAVE Act will enhance existing federal school safety programs by providing a sharper picture of school violence and focusing on remedying the problems that contribute to unsafe learning environments. The SAVE Act begins to address the need for basic security in our nation's schools.

Finally, the prevention of school violence and bullying can be addressed, in part, by community schools. Community schools bring together under one roof the services and activities that our children and their families need, including social, legal, recreational, counseling, health and dental services. Community schools can be open longer hours, and can provide structured academic and enrichment options for all students. With community schools, the bullying and violence that now often occurs after school hours and off school grounds could be prevented.

The bottom line is that all stakeholders must work together to create safe school environments that foster respect so that students and teachers are able to do their very best.

[Additional submissions of Mr. Castle follow:]

Performance Values: Why They Matter and What Schools Can Do to Foster Their Development[1]

A Position Paper of the Character Education Partnership (CEP)

Executive Summary

This position paper sets forth an expanded view of character and character education that recognizes the importance of performance character (needed for best work) as well as moral character (needed for ethical behavior). While core ethical values remain foundational in a life of character, character education must also develop students' performance values such as effort, diligence, and perseverance in order to promote academic learning, foster an ethic of excellence, and develop the skills needed to act upon ethical values. The paper reviews research on the complementary contributions of performance character and moral character to human development and achievement and describes ten practices that teachers and schools have used to develop performance character. In this expanded vision of character education, a school or community of character is one that helps us "be our best" and "do our best" in all areas of our lives.

As they come of age in a new century, our children face great and growing challenges. On a global scale, they confront an increasingly interdependent economy, exploding technological change, an environment at risk, and a world still plagued by war, disease, and injustice. In a workplace that offers diminishing job security, their ability to interact well with others and adapt to change will matter more than technical expertise.[2] And in their personal lives, young people face the challenge of building healthy relationships and a life of noble purpose in a culture that is often unsupportive of the highest values of the human spirit.

Schools, charged with preparing students to meet these formidable challenges, face a related yet more immediate set of challenges:

Maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment

Achieving adequate yearly progress on external academic standards

Reducing drop-outs (30% nationally, as high as 50% in some urban areas)

Improving students' performance on international tests

Helping all students achieve and work to their potential, not just attain better grades or higher test scores.

What kind of character will young people need to meet the challenges they face in school and beyond—and how can schools help them develop it while meeting their own set of challenges?

The Role of Work in a Life of Character

"The most important human endeavor," Albert Einstein wrote, "is striving for morality." We are defined by our core ethical values—our integrity, our sense of justice and compassion, and the degree to which we respect the dignity and worth of every member of the human family, especially the most vulnerable among us. Research studies conducted in different cultures around the world have substantiated the universality of core ethical values.[3]

We are also known to others by the quality of our work. The quality of the work we do is influenced by many factors, including our skills, the presence or absence of a supportive human environment, and "performance values" such as diligence, preparation for the task at hand, and commitment to the best of which we are capable. The importance of work in people's lives, and even what is regarded as work, may vary among individuals and cultures. Yet in broad terms, our work is one of the most basic ways we affect the quality of other people's lives. When we do our work well—whether teaching a lesson, repairing a car, caring for the sick, or parenting a child—someone typically benefits. When we do our work poorly, someone usually suffers. The essayist Lance Morrow notes the centrality of work to the human community: "All life must be worked at, protected, planted, replanted, fashioned, cooked for, coaxed, diapered, formed, sustained. Work is the way we tend the world."

Where do we learn to care about the quality of our work and to develop the skills to do it well? To a large extent, in school. In his book, An Ethic of Excellence: Building a Culture of Craftsmanship with Students, Ron Berger says that during his nearly 30 years as a public school teacher, he also worked part-time as a carpenter. "In carpentry," he writes, "there is no higher compliment than this: 'That person is a craftsman.' That one word connotes someone who has integrity, knowledge, dedication, and pride in work—someone who thinks carefully and does things well."[4] Berger continues:

I want a classroom full of craftsmen. I want students whose work is strong and accurate and beautiful. In my classroom, I have students who come from homes full of books and students whose families own almost no books at all. I have students whose lives are generally easy and students with physical disabilities and health or

family problems that make life a struggle. I want them all to be craftsmen. Some may take a little longer; some may need to use extra strategies and resources. In the end, they need to be proud of their work, and their work needs to be worthy of pride.

All of us who teach would like our students to be craftsmen—to think carefully about their work, take pride in it, and produce work that is worthy of pride. Teachers, however, say they often struggle to motivate students to care about the quality of their work. Students who don't develop an orientation toward doing their best work in school may carry that over later in life. As educators, we recognize that some students' path toward self-discovery, motivation, and accomplishment may emerge outside of the regular classroom in such venues as the fine arts, vocational arts and sciences, and athletics. By work, we mean all these forms of endeavor that engage a person in effortful and meaningful accomplishment.

Expanding Our View of Character

As character educators, how can we foster students' capacity to work and commitment to doing their work well, in school and throughout life? First, we must expand our view of character to recognize this important dimension of human development. Human maturity includes the capacity to love and the capacity to work. Character strengths such as empathy, fairness, trustworthiness, generosity, and compassion are aspects of our capacity to love. These qualities make up what we could speak of as "moral character;" they enable us to be our best ethical selves in relationships and in our roles as citizens. Character strengths such as effort, initiative, diligence, self-discipline, and perseverance constitute our capacity to work. These qualities make up what we could speak of as "performance character;" they enable us to achieve, given a supportive environment, our highest potential in any performance context (the classroom, the athletic arena, the workplace, etc.). By differentiating moral character and performance character, we do not intend to "reify" them as separate psychological entities; indeed, some persons may find it more conceptually helpful to think of these as being two "aspects" of our character rather than two distinct "parts" of character.

The moral and performance aspects of character are mutually supportive. The moral aspects, besides enabling us to treat each other with fairness, respect, and care, ensure that we pursue our performance goals in ethical rather than unethical ways. We don't lie, cheat, steal, or exploit other people in order to succeed; rather, our performance efforts contribute positively to the lives of others. The performance aspects of our character, in turn, enable us to act on our moral values and make a positive difference in the world. We take initiative to right a wrong or be of service to others; we persevere to overcome problems and mend relationships; we work selflessly on behalf of others or for a noble cause, often without recognition or reward. In all realms of life, good intentions aren't enough; being our best requires work.

Both moral and performance character are necessary to achieve the goals for which all schools of character strive. Moral character plays a central role in helping schools create safe and caring environments, prevent peer cruelty, decrease discipline problems, reduce cheating, foster social and emotional skills, develop ethical thinking, and produce public-spirited democratic citizens. Performance character plays a central role in helping schools improve all students' academic achievement, promote an ethic of excellence, reduce drop-outs, prepare a competent and responsible workforce, and equip young persons with the skills they will need to lead productive, fulfilling lives and contribute to the common good. Both the moral and performance aspects of character are, of course, needed for all of the above pursuits; for example, we must work hard (an aspect of performance character), in order to create and sustain a caring school environment, just as we must build caring relationships (an aspect of moral character) in order to be effective at helping students learn and achieve.

What Research Shows

Various studies show the contribution of performance character to human development and achievement. Stanford psychologist Walter Mischel and colleagues conducted a study, popularly known as "the marshmallow test," that assessed the ability of 4-year-olds to delay gratification (an important aspect of performance character) and then assessed the "cognitive and self-regulatory competencies" of these same subjects when they were seniors in high school. The 4-year-olds were each given a marshmallow and a choice: If they ate the marshmallow when the experimenter left the room to run an errand, that was the only marshmallow they got; but if they waited 15 minutes for the experimenter to return, they received a second marshmallow. (Psychologists note that whether a child sees delaying gratification as

an appropriate response in a particular situation may be influenced by family, neighborhood, and cultural factors.[5])

Those who, at age four, had been "waiters" on the marshmallow test, compared to those who did not delay gratification, were subsequently better able as adolescents to make and follow through on plans; more likely to persevere in the face of difficulty; more self-reliant and dependable; better able to cope with stress; better able to concentrate on a task; and more academically competent—scoring, on average, more than 100 points higher on a college entrance exam.[6] Mischel concluded that impulse control in the service of a distant goal is a "meta-ability," affecting the development of many important psychological capacities.

In Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification, Christopher Peterson and Martin Seligman present theoretical and empirical support for performance character attributes such as creativity, curiosity, love of learning, and persistence.[7] Recent research on expert performance in the arts and sciences, sports, and games reveals that stars are made, not born. Outstanding performance is the product of years of deliberate practice and coaching—training that develops performance character as well as higher levels of the target skill—rather than the result of innate talent.[8] Longitudinal studies such as Talented Teenagers: The Roots of Success and Failure find that adolescents who develop their talent to high levels, compared to equally gifted peers who don't fulfill their potential, show higher levels of such performance character qualities as goal-setting and wise time management.[9]

Research also helps us understand how the moral and performance aspects of character interact. Studies such as Colby and Damon's Some Do Care: Contemporary Lives of Moral Commitment reveal both strong performance character (e.g., determination, organization, and creativity) and strong moral character (e.g., a sense of justice, integrity, and humility) working synergistically to account for exemplars' achievements in fields as varied as civil rights, education, business, philanthropy, the environment, and religion.[10] Students themselves affirm the complementary roles of performance character and moral character. When researcher Kathryn Wentzel asked middle school students, "How do you know when a teacher cares about you?," they identified two behavior patterns: The teacher teaches well (makes class interesting, stays on task, stops to explain something), and the teacher treats them well (is respectful, kind, and fair).[11] In other words, "a caring teacher" models both performance character and moral character.

Ten Ways Schools Can Foster the Development of Performance Character

In books, curricula, and research reports (see, for example, What Works in Character Education[12]) over the past two decades, the character education literature has described a great many practices for developing moral character. A smaller number of publications have also described practices that develop performance character; these resources include Berger's An Ethic of Excellence, the report Smart & Good High Schools: Integrating Excellence and Ethics for Success in School, Work, and Beyond,[13] and CEP's annual National Schools of Character publication (which profiles award-winning schools and districts, including what they do to foster achievement and excellence).[14]

Because performance character has received less attention in the literature than moral character, we focus in the remainder of this paper on how to develop performance values, describing ten practices—some schoolwide, some classroom-focused—that are supported by research and used by exemplary educators. These school-based strategies do not replace the important contribution that parenting practices make to performance character development; nor do they reduce the need for schools to reach out to families as partners in encouraging their children's effort and learning. But these ten practices, especially taken together, can help to shape a school and peer-group culture that maximizes the motivation to learn and achieve, even in students who might not bring such dispositions to the classroom.

1. Create a safe and supportive learning community. In order to be ready to learn and disposed to develop their performance character, students must feel safe and supported in school. A caring school community that respects student differences and creates a sense of belonging among students and staff lays the groundwork for hard work and academic success. A landmark study of 90,000 middle and high school students found that students who feel "connected" to school, as measured by the quality of their relationships with teachers and schoolmates, are more likely to be motivated to learn and have heightened academic aspirations and achievement.[15] (See Charles Elbot and David Fulton's Building an Intentional School Culture: Excellence in Academics and Character for ways to create a schoolwide learning community with a high level of connectedness around shared core values.[16])

2. Create a culture of excellence. Excellence is born from a culture. Schools should therefore do everything possible to foster a culture where it's "cool to care about ex-

cellence" and where all students, given enough time and support, are seen as capable of high-quality work. When students enter a culture that demands and supports excellence, they will do their best work in order to fit in. Berger's An Ethic of Excellence shows how teachers can create this culture of excellence by being consistent across classrooms in expecting students' best effort and by providing well-designed project-based learning that elicits quality work. "Work of excellence is transformational," Berger writes. "Once a student sees that he or she is capable of excellence, that student is never quite the same. There is a new self-image, a new notion of possibility." As we help all students aspire to quality work in the classroom, we must also keep in mind that there are many paths to excellence, including those offered by co-curricular activities. For many young people, the entry into the experience of "craftsmanship" may be the band, the art class, or the basketball team (see Smart & Good High Schools for illustrative case studies). Research confirms the power of co-curricular activities to positively impact life outcomes related to both moral and performance character.[17]

3. Foster, in both faculty and students, a "growth mindset" that emphasizes the importance of effort. Studies indicate that our confidence in the face of challenges, another important aspect of performance character, is affected by our underlying beliefs about intelligence and personality. Over years of research, Carol Dweck found that the way in which students and adults answer questions such as, "Is intelligence set, or can you change it?" and "Are you a certain kind of person, or can you change yourself substantially?" tends to predict how they will respond to challenges both in school and life in general. A "fixed mindset"—the belief that our abilities are for the most part set at birth—can lead us to label and stereotype ourselves and others, avoid challenges, focus more on grades than on learning, hide our mistakes, and even cheat to avoid the appearance of failure. In sharp contrast, a "growth mindset"—the belief that we can improve with effort—can lead us to be curious, engage in learning for its own sake, pursue challenges, and increase our efforts to overcome obstacles.

To persons with a fixed mindset, grades are an evaluation of their worth; to persons with a growth mindset, grades are indication of whether they have met their goals or need to apply more effort.[18] Two clear educational implications of Dweck's research: (1) emphasize effort rather than innate ability ("You worked hard on that paper" rather than "You're such a talented writer"), and (2) view all students as full of potential rather than limited by labels and stereotypes. We can also foster a growth mindset and performance character development by helping students take on challenges that provide stretch but are within their current reach (not too easy and not too hard), by helping them build the skills needed for success, and by encouraging them to extend their reach over time.

4. Develop thinking dispositions in all members of the school community. Besides developing adults' and students' belief in the power of effort, we can foster other types of thinking dispositions that are part of performance character and that play an important role in learning. Project Zero at Harvard University has defined "intellectual character" to include such dispositions as being open-minded, curious, metacognitive (reflecting on thinking), strategic, skeptical, and seeking truth and understanding.[19] These thinking dispositions also contain within them moral values such as willingness to listen to others' ideas, valuing what is true over what is self-serving or expedient, and being honest about one's thinking and beliefs. As with moral values, these "habits of mind" are developed through discussion, modeling and observation, practice, and reflection. Coaching students in conflict resolution and teaching them to "think before acting" provide further opportunities for nurturing these intellectual dispositions. Such dispositions of mind should also be the guiding norm for the adults who make up the school's professional learning community as they interact and help each other do their best work.

5. Assign work that matters. Creating a culture of thinking and a culture of excellence requires a powerful pedagogy, one that motivates students to do thoughtful, high-quality work and to acquire the performance character attributes needed to do such work. One important pedagogical practice is assigning work that matters—work that inspires students because it is challenging, meaningful, affects others, and is therefore intrinsically rewarding. Ron Berger describes one such project in which his 6th-graders interviewed senior citizens and wrote their biographies: "No one needed to tell them the reason for doing a quality job. These books were to be gifts to the seniors, gifts that might become precious family heirlooms. They wanted critique and help from everyone. They read the final drafts of their opening paragraphs aloud to the whole class for suggestions. They labored, draft after draft, over their cover designs. They wanted their books to be perfect." Doing work that positively impacts others fosters students' intrinsic motivation by fulfilling several inter-

related human needs: making a contribution, feeling connected within a community, and experiencing a sense of competence.

6. Provide models of excellence. If we want students to aspire to excellence, they must see what excellence looks like. Many schools take pains to provide students with varied examples of high-quality work on a given assignment before students begin their own work. What makes a particular drawing, science project, or piece of writing so good? What was the process of achieving such high quality? What mistakes and revisions were likely part of the process? Berger's An Ethic of Excellence offers helpful examples of how teachers can become "archivers of excellence" and use models of excellence effectively to launch student projects.

7. Develop a culture that encourages feedback and revision. Group feedback sessions can serve as a central strategy for developing performance character. Students bring their work to the circle, solicit comments and suggestions from their peers and the teacher, and use that feedback to revise and improve their work. (Some teachers encourage multiple revisions of at least some assignments, emphasizing quality of work over quantity.) The teacher uses the critique session as the optimal context for teaching students necessary academic concepts and skills. Students presenting a piece of work typically begin by explaining their ideas or goals and stating what they would like help with. Classmates respond first with positive comments and then offer suggestions, often sensitively phrased as questions: "Would you consider making such-and-such change?" Through this process of supportive group critique, guided by norms of respect and care, students function as an ethical learning community where they not only pursue their own best work but also strive to bring out each other's best work.

8. Prepare students to make public presentations of their work. Students work harder to do their best when they know their work will be presented to an audience beyond the classroom. In some schools, every project that students complete is shared with some kind of an outside audience, whether another class, the principal, parents, or the wider community. The teacher's role is not to be the sole judge of students' work but to function like a sports coach or play director, helping students prepare their work for the public eye. In a similar way, some high schools require seniors to do an "exhibition"—a public presentation to a jury of teachers, peers, and at least one community expert—of long-term research or creative work. Service learning projects often involve sharing one's work in this public way. If we require students to publicly present their work, we must, of course, help them acquire and practice the skills they will need to make successful presentations.

9. Use rubrics to help students take responsibility for their learning. Columbine Elementary School (Woodland Park, CO), a 2000 National School of Character, shows how to use rubrics to help students learn to self-assess, set goals, and in general take responsibility for their learning. Columbine has seven "personal and social responsibility standards" that are integrated into classroom instruction and students' report cards. Performance character is represented by four of these standards: (1) "practices organizational skills," (2) "takes risks and accepts challenges," (3) "listens attentively and stays on task," and (4) "evaluates own learning." Each standard is further broken down into specific skills. For each skill, there are four levels of competence: "in progress," "basic," "proficient," and "advanced." For example, the first item under "practices organization skills" addresses "completing and turning in work." The four levels of competence in this skill are: "in progress: I rarely complete my work and turn it in on time;" "basic: I sometimes remember to hand in my completed work, but I need a lot of reminding;" "proficient: I usually remember to hand in my completed work with few reminders;" and "advanced: I consistently hand in my work with no reminders." Teachers conference with students individually to help them assess where they are on the rubrics and set goals for improvement.

10. Encourage mastery learning. In 1968, Benjamin Bloom developed an approach to teaching called mastery learning that has much potential to develop performance character. Mastery learning requires all students to achieve a certain level of mastery of a given concept or skill.[20] If they do not achieve it on the first try, they keep trying. Five of the six major research reviews of this approach substantiate its positive effects on student achievement.[21] (Mastery learning, like any other pedagogy, can be abused; it can lead to demoralization if students are asked to perform at certain levels but are not helped to attain those standards.) At Quest School (Humble, TX), a 2002 National School of Character that uses mastery learning, a teacher explains: "Our whole program is about perseverance. In the beginning, kids don't realize that they will have to redo an assignment—two or three or four times—until they get it right. They learn to persevere." A student offered his view of mastery learning's benefits: "You have to know your work forwards and backwards. If your data analysis on a project isn't good, you'll get it back. And if you get lower than a B in a class, you retake it." A school leader added: "Over the four years, students

come to set an internal bar for the quality of their work. Our goal is for them to internalize the revision process. They know that in senior year, they have only one chance to revise a paper or re-take a test. They begin to turn in quality the first time."

A Conclusion

Throughout history, and in cultures around the world, education rightly conceived has had two great goals: to help students become smart and to help them become good. They need character for both. They need moral character in order to behave ethically, strive for social justice, and live and work in community. They need performance character in order to enact their moral principles and succeed in school and in life. Virtue, as the ancient Greeks pointed out, means human excellence. To be a school of character or a community of character is to strive to be our best and do our best in all areas of our lives.

ENDNOTES

[1] This paper's expanded view of character as including moral 1. and performance character builds on work first presented in Thomas Lickona and Matthew Davidson's Smart & Good High Schools, jointly published by the Center for the 4th and 5th Rs and the Character Education Partnership in 2005 with major funding from the John Templeton Foundation.

[2] Casner-Lotto & L. Barrington, 2. Are they really ready to work? (Washington, DC: The Conference Board, 2006). Available at *www.conference-board.org*.

[3] C. Peterson & M. Seligman, 3. Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification. (New York: American Psychological Association and Oxford University Press, 2004).

[4] R. Berger, A4. n ethic of excellence. (Plymouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003).

[5] We are grateful to Professor Marisha Humphries, 5. University of Illinois at Chicago, for this point.

[6] Y. Shoda, W. Mischel, & P.K. Peake, "Predicting 6. adolescent cognitive and self-regulatory competencies from preschool delay of gratification," Developmental Psychology, 1990, 26, 6, 978—86.

[7] Peterson & Seligman. 7.

[8] K. A. Ericsson, N. Charness, P.J. Feltovich, & R.R. Hoffman 8. (Eds.), The Cambridge handbook of expertise and expert performance. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[9] M. Csikszentmihalyi, et al., 9. Talented teenagers. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[10] A. Colby & W. Damon, 10. Some do care. (New York: Free Press, 1998).

[11] K. Wentzel, "Are effective teachers like good parents?" 11. Child Development, 2002, 73, 287—301.

[12] Berkowitz & M. Bier, 12. What works in character education. (Washington, DC: Character Education Partnership, 2006). This report can be downloaded from *www.characterandcitizenship.org*.

[13] T. Lickona & M. Davidson, 13. Smart & good high schools. (Cortland, NY: Center for the 4th and 5th Rs; Washington, DC: Character Education Partnership, 2005). This report can be downloaded from *www.cortland.edu/character*. See also M. Davidson, T. Lickona, & V. Khmelkov, "Smart & good schools: A new paradigm for high school character education," in L. Nucci and D. Narvaez (Eds.), Handbook of Moral and Character Education (New York: Routledge, 2008).

[14] For more information about the National Schools 14. of Character program, visit *www.character.org*.

[15] M.D. Resnick, et al., "Protecting adolescents from 15. harm: Findings from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health," Journal of the American Medical Association, 1997, 278, 10, 823—832.

[16] C.F. Elbot & D.V. Fulton, 16. Building an intentional school culture. (New York: Corwin Press, 2007).

[17] See Lickona & Davidson, pp. 112—114.17.

[18] C.S. Dweck, 18. Self-theories: Their role in motivation, personality, and development. (Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press, 2000).

[19] R. Richhart, Intellectual character. (San 19. Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002).

[20] Benjamin Bloom, A20. ll our children learning: A primer for parents, teachers, and other educators. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981).

[21] See, for example, J.H. Block et al., 21. Building effective mastery learning schools. (New York: Longman, 1989).

Prepared Statement of Jon C. Marshall, Ed.D.

Chairwoman McCarthy, Chairman Kildee, Ranking Members Platts and Castle, and distinguished members of the Committee. Thank you for providing me with an opportunity to provide testimony to you today.

I have been conducting educational research and program evaluation since 1967. I have seen many programs come and go. Integrated Character Education is the first process that I have seen that has the promise to provide optimum school improvement through transforming schools into high quality places to be. We cannot teach a student who does not want to learn. We cannot stop bullying and other mis-

behaviors through threat and intimidation. These axioms are givens. We know it; we have research to "prove" it. Yet, in most schools today we still education students through rewards for winners and punishment for all others. The top 10% get the praise, trophies, certificates and other rewards we bestow on the desired behavior. The other 90% are told they are not good enough; that they are lazy or somehow too handicapped to reach high levels of success. And, then we wonder why we fail. So we pile on more rewards for the winners and grater punishment for the losers. And, again we fail. This cycle has been the norm for American education for over 100 years. It is time that it stops.

Integrated character education is the answer to breaking the hideous education cycle by creating schools where teachers and students want to be; by developing student character so that they want to learn, they feel safe in the learning environment, and know that they can succeed. There is room enough at the top for everyone.

Bullying and similar anti-social behavior is caused by the frustration individuals feel when they do not belong to the "club." And, for students and teachers, the club is the school and the classroom.

Experimental studies in character education that met the research criteria required by NCLB, funded under PCEP, illustrate is point. Two of these studies were conducted in Missouri and a third in Alabama. Overall, over 150 schools were involved. With the introduction of school-wide, integrated character education, student discipline problems dropped by 30 to nearly 50% in a very short time. This positive change was most prominent in acts against people reflecting those behaviors common to bullying. Stopping most anti-social behaviors of children and teens can be accomplished through positive character development; developing schools of character. And, we now have the experimental research to prove it.

Also, as shown in the Missouri studies, associated with the major improvement in student social behavior is a large increase in achievement. When character education reaches directly into the classroom, up to a 50% increase can be expected in reading and math in the percent of student scoring proficient or advanced levels in typical schools.

Integrated character education builds healthy schools. Healthy schools have positive environments for students and staff. And, in healthy schools there is marked positive student behavior with minimal problems like bullying and optimum test scores.

Prepared Statement of Mr. Joseph W. Mazzola, Executive Director, Character Education Partnership

Chairwoman McCarthy, Chairman Kildee, ranking members Platts and Castle, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for providing me with an opportunity to provide written testimony as a follow up to the hearing held on July 8, 2009.

I present my testimony on behalf of Character Education Partnership and, more importantly, the many constituents from across the nation we represent. We are a national nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian coalition of organizations committed to leading the nation in helping schools develop people of good character for a just and compassionate society.

As you have heard from the other witnesses, we face serious problems in our nation's schools. Every single day 160,000 students skip school out of fear of getting beaten up * * * 50% of high school and 25% of middle school students report the use or sale of drugs at their schools * * * 64% of high school students admit to cheating * * * every 26 seconds, a young person drops out of school. Regrettably, the list goes on.

To address many of these problems, and create learning environments where students (and teachers) will flourish, I urge the Congress to mandate specific methods that improve school culture and student pro-social behavior as part of our national education policy.

One strategy that addresses these areas is comprehensive character education. We know this to be true from over a decade of managing the National Schools of Character program. Consider these examples of schools that stress respect, honesty, diligence, responsibility and more, as part of their core missions:

- Waterloo Middle School in NY increased math proficiency from 43% to 95% and English Language Arts proficiency from 38% to 85%, from 2004-2009.
- Newport Mill Middle School in MD dramatically narrowed its achievement gap. The number of African American students who scored proficient in math went from 34% to 76% in two years.

• Ridgewood Middle School in MO went from one of the worst performing schools in the state to one of the top 10 most improved. Disciplinary referrals went down by 70%, attendance rose to 95%, failure rates dropped to zero, and parent conference attendance went from 44% to 75%.

• Hinsdale Central High School in IL lowered bullying and harassment incidents from 50-60 per year to about 10, and reduced vandalism incidents by 92%. The school stresses civic engagement and service. It was recognized as one of the top 5 high schools in Illinois.

• Wilton Manors Elementary School in FL raised its state rating from "D" to "A." This school's disciplinary referrals for aggressive behavior decreased by 80%, from 211 cases in 2002-2003 to just 14 cases last year.

I could cite many other examples of schools our organization has identified and recognized for excellence in character development. The point, however, is that we consistently see that a strong commitment to competence and character, coupled with bold leadership, leads to improved school culture and climate. When that happens, all important indices move in the right direction—which is what you, as leaders of our nation, want to see happen in America's schools. Making character development a component of your strategy will help ensure success in many areas.

The President has said that we must restore America's moral standing and further stated that honesty, tolerance and fair play are values upon which our overall success as a nation depends. By implementing quality, comprehensive character education in America's schools, we can help students reach new heights of achievement and develop future ethical leaders of our country.

Finally, the most important reason for doing what I have suggested is because it is simply the right thing to do. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, "Intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education." And Teddy Roosevelt said, "To educate a person in mind but not in morals is to educate a menace to society."

I believe that all members of the Committee would agree with both of the above quotes. Schools must graduate both smart and good students—people who are more apt to become compassionate citizens, competent and honest employees, and trustworthy leaders of our communities, nation and world.

Not long ago, our organization sent a letter to Secretary Duncan proposing what you have heard in this testimony. Over 40 other national, regional and state organizations were official signatories. Given the emphasis on positive school reform from the new administration, we felt it was important to communicate the potential benefits of comprehensive character education, much as I have done here.

In closing, I implore you to restore a minimum of $25M in funding for the US Department of Education's Partnerships in Character Education Program. The funds will help schools improve culture and climate, thus allowing many students to reach their potential. It will also lead to positive change on a host of important fronts, to include increased academic achievement and decreased bullying. And, it is in the best long-term interest of our nation. Thank you for your consideration and dedicated service to our great nation.

"Within the Character of the citizen lies the welfare of the Republic."—Cicero

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Prepared Statement of Sanford N. McDonnell, Chairman Emeritus, Character Education Partnership

Chairwoman McCarthy, Chairman Kildee, Ranking Members Platts and Castle, and distinguished members of the Committee: thank you for providing me with an opportunity to provide testimony to you today.

The Clinton Administration initiated the Partnerships in Character Education Program (PCEP). During the Bush Administration, approximately $25 million annually was devoted to this program, just ½0th of one percent of the Department of Education (ED) budget. The White House FY2010 budget recommends those funds be cut to zero. I understand the reason given was that the federal character education program is ineffective. However, current ED websites report that evidenced-based results for character education interventions showed positive effects on both student behavior and academic achievements. Eliminating this successful school improvement program seems to be inconsistent with the Administration's and Congress's goals for improving our nation's schools.

In Missouri we started an initiative in 1988 in 7 St. Louis County public school districts that we now call CHARACTERplus. It has grown to 51 districts representing over 520 schools and 288,000 students. There are an additional 310 schools throughout Missouri, representing another 112,000 students, and 29 schools in Madison County, Illinois representing 21,000 students. Funding for this comes

primarily from the local districts and from the State of Missouri, a PCEP grant, and contributions.

Evaluation results from these schools show that a quality character education program addresses all of the serious youth problems of drugs, violence, lying, cheating, stealing, racism, dropouts, and bullying. And in the process, it results in improved academic performance and greatly improved student behavior. Research in other states also shows that quality character education has similar results. The enclosed Performance Values position paper of the Character Education Partnership explains why a quality character education program is a total school reform answer to all the youth problems, not just drugs and safety.

There is not one dollar allocated for character education in either the White House $90 billion stimulus package for education or the White House recommended $46 billion FY2010 budget for the Department of Education. Ignoring the character education of our young people seems inconsistent with the Administration's frequently expressed concern for the numerous character problems facing the nation in almost every sector of American life. Please at least restore the $25 million in the FY2010 budget.

"Character, in the long run, is the decisive factor in the life of an individual and of nations alike."—President Theodore Roosevelt

Thank you.

[Questions submitted for the record and their responses:]

[VIA EMAIL],
U.S. CONGRESS,
Washington, DC, July 16, 2009.

Dr. SCOTT POLAND, *Associate Professor,*
Center for Psychological Studies, Director of Internships Specialist Program in School Psychology, Coordinator, Suicide and Violence Prevention Office, Nova Southeastern University, Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

DEAR DR. POLAND: Thank you for testifying at the "Strengthening School Safety through Prevention of Bullying" joint Subcommittee hearing on July 8, 2009.

Representative Linda Sanchez (D-CA) has asked that you respond in writing to the following questions:

I understand that bullying and harassment policies are sometimes unevenly administered, leaving some of the most vulnerable students unprotected. What does practice tell us about the importance of explicitly defining bullying and harassment as part of a school's school safety policy?

I believe parental and community engagement is critical to fostering a positive school environment. What steps can be taken to ensure that parents, caregivers, and administrators/teachers have access to information about the incidence of bullying and harassment in their schools?

Please send an electronic version of your written responses to Committee staff at by close of business on Wednesday, July 22, 2009—the date on which the hearing record will close. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Committee.

Sincerely,

GEORGE MILLER,
Chairman.

Responses to Questions for the Record From Dr. Poland

Thank you for the opportunity to testify at the "Strengthening School Safety through Prevention of Bullying" Joint Subcommittee hearing on July 8, 2009.

I compliment Representative Linda Sanchez (D-CA) for her dedication on the important topic of school safety and I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond in writing to the following questions:

Question 1. I understand that bullying and harassment policies are sometimes unevenly administered, leaving some of the most vulnerable students unprotected. What does practice tell us about the importance of explicitly defining bullying and harassment as part of a school's school safety policy?

Response: My primary concern has been the lack of commitment that many schools have made to school safety. Many times in my 30 years of working in and consulting with schools, the response from school administration about safety issues

and bullying is always, "We have it covered" or "It does not happen here", when I know that is not the case at all.

I strongly support defining bullying and had hoped that the testimony on July 8th would have emphasized more clearly the definition of bullying. Bullying is emotionally harmful, repetitive and the objective is to have power and to humiliate the victim. The result for the victims of bullying is most importantly stress and loss of self-esteem and secondarily bullying interferes with learning. Every student has the right to be protected from being bullied at school.

I focused much of my testimony on making school administrators more accountable for school safety planning and bullying prevention. Every school needs to enforce the code of conduct that clearly states that harassment and intimidation of anyone is not allowed at school. In addition many states have enacted laws that address bullying specifically and cite the need for more training of school staff to prevent bullying. That training must include a comprehensive definition of bullying that clearly describes the behaviors designed to humiliate the victim and how bullying prevention fits into a comprehensive school safety plan. Bullying prevention will only be strengthened when campus and district level administrators are held accountable.

Question 2: I believe parental and community engagement is critical to fostering a positive school environment. What steps can be taken to ensure that parents, caregivers, and administrators/teachers have access to information about the incidence of bullying and harassment in their schools?

Response: The role of students in school safety is the most critical component for a positive school environment. I recommend utilizing student safety pledges to gain a commitment from students about key safety measures and bullying prevention. For example, because I am convinced students know the least supervised areas of their school where bullying is most likely to occur, I recommend having all students review the floor plan of their school to highlight the areas in the building where they feel least safe. The wise school administrator would increase supervision by adults in those areas.

Parental input is also essential for school safety planning. Principals have stated, "That parent demanded that I guarantee their child's safety at school and I can not do that." Any parent who is concerned about safety at school needs to be invited to participate in the ongoing school safety task force that welcomes parental input and utilizes community expertise! One school principal held a highly attended safety task force meeting. More than 400 parents participated as a result of incentives provided to students for encouraging their parents to attend.

An administrator investigating a bullying incident needs to notify the parents of the child being bullied so that support may be offered to them. I emphasized in my verbal testimony that the number of mental health professionals such as counselors, school psychologists and social workers needs to, at a minimum, be doubled in schools. School administrators should not hesitate to survey students, staff and parents to ask questions about safety and bullying. In my opinion, every school board needs to hold their educational leaders more accountable for strengthening school safety and bullying prevention.

[VIA EMAIL],
U.S. CONGRESS,
Washington, DC, July 16, 2009.

KENNETH S. TRUMP, M.P.A., *President,*
National School Safety and Security Services, Cleveland, OH.

DEAR MR. TRUMP: Thank you for testifying at the "Strengthening School Safety through Prevention of Bullying" joint Subcommittee hearing on July 8, 2009.

Representative Linda Sanchez (D-CA) has asked that you respond in writing to the following questions:

I have introduced two anti-bullying bills, neither of which represent an unfunded mandate, the Safe Schools Improvement Act and the Bullying and Gang Reduction foe Improved Education Act. Together, the bills expand the purpose of the existing Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act, an existing program, to be sure that schools prohibit bullying, collect data on its frequency and impacts, and are free to use the grant funds they do receive in a variety of ways to address bullying, harassment, and gang prevention if they so choose. If the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act is not funded in any given year, my bills would not require schools to expend any funds.

Sometimes state anti-bullying policies alone, not backed by the threat of the removal of federal funds, are simply not enough. Even in California, there have been

many incidents where victims of bullying have been punished instead of the perpetrators

For example, a California student, who happened to be a lesbian, was recently subjected to verbal harassment and name calling by students and teachers, spit on in school hallways, subjected to sexually suggestive touching, and even referred to an independent study program—as if the bullying and harassment were the victim's fault.

Not only did the school not protect this young woman from discrimination on the basis of her sexual orientation: it condoned harassment by teachers and punished her for the crimes of others.

Given incidents like this, would you agree that efforts to focus on bullying as part of an overall school safety strategy are in fact necessary? If not, why not?

Please send an electronic version of your written responses to Committee staff at by close of business on Wednesday, July 22, 2009—the date on which the hearing record will close. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Committee.

Sincerely,

GEORGE MILLER,
Chairman.

Responses to Questions for the Record From Mr. Trump

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify at the "Strengthening School Safety through Prevention of Bullying" joint Subcommittee hearing on July 8, 2009.

My response to the question from Representative Linda Sanchez is below.

Question: I have introduced two anti-bullying bills, neither of which represent an unfunded mandate, the Safe Schools Improvement Act and the Bullying and Gang Reduction foe Improved Education Act. Together, the bills expand the purpose of the existing Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act, an existing program, to be sure that schools prohibit bullying, collect data on its frequency and impacts, and are free to use the grant funds they do receive in a variety of ways to address bullying, harassment, and gang prevention if they so choose. If the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act is not funded in any given year, my bills would not require schools to expend any funds.

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Given incidents like this, would you agree that efforts to focus on bullying as part of an overall school safety strategy are in fact necessary? If not, why not?

Response: Congresswoman Sanchez, thank you for taking a leadership role in keeping school safety on the Congressional agenda.

I believe all students and school staff should be safe at school. Bullying is one of many issues which must be taken into consideration in developing comprehensive safe schools prevention, intervention, and enforcement plans. As referred to in your question, school gang prevention, intervention, and enforcement strategies and resources are also needed as we are seeing increased concerns about gang activities impacting a number of school communities across the nation.

I agree with you that proposed and passed state anti-bullying laws are questionable in terms of their effectiveness. Many proposed and enacted state anti-bullying laws are unfunded mandates, and are vague and/or questionable in defining the actual behaviors that would constitute bullying. They also fail to provide any new and/or useful tools to support school administrators beyond their already existing student discipline codes of conduct and, their school climate plans and strategies already in place.

Behaviors constituting bullying include verbal threats, menacing, harassment, intimidation, assaults, sexual assaults, extortion, disruption of the school environment, and associated disorderly conduct. In defining "bullying," the focus must be on defining those behaviors which constitute bullying, not vague, generic, and non-

specific labels or definitions, or definitions based on personal traits or characteristics of the victims. The vast majority of schools in the nation have disciplinary policies and student codes of conduct to address these behaviors. School policies, parent/student handbooks, and related student conduct codes typically outline such inappropriate behaviors and corresponding disciplinary consequences.

Schools nationwide also have school climate, prevention and intervention, and other school improvement plans to prevent and manage bullying behaviors and improve overall school climate. Anti-bullying and school climate strategies are referenced in the majority of schools we have worked with around the country. Discipline and school climate strategies, combined with balanced and reasonable security measures targeting "hot spots" where bullying occurs, can create a safer and more secure climate.

The focus may then need to be on identifying how we can get school boards and administrators to focus on implementing those policies and programs already on the books, versus requiring them to create new rules and regulations. This is a challenge we face in many areas of school safety, such as school crisis plans and planning, and we should have the same degree of accountability for school administrators on school safety as we are demanding of them for academic performance.

Having no firsthand knowledge of all of the facts of the case, I am unable to opine on the specific California case highlighted in your question. Many questions would need to be asked: Were policies in place in the district's student code of conduct that were not enforced? Was a state anti-bullying policy in place and was it already reflected in the local district's code of conduct, but not followed or enforced? What training of administrators and staff had been provided on the student conduct code, school climate strategies, and school safety? Were students disciplined in the case, but the district was prohibited from releasing the results of such disciplinary action due to privacy obligations under FERPA? Were actions taken against school employees, but those actions not made public due to employee personnel record privacy?

Your question also indicates a claim of discrimination in the California case. This would raise questions as to whether existing federal educational rights laws, and existing federal and state civil rights laws, provide already existing avenues for the victim to pursue to address discrimination claims in the case? It is also my understanding that House and Senate committees have recently passed out of their committees bills that provide expanded hate crimes definitions to include those victimized because of real or perceived sexual orientation, gender, and gender identity. Does this mean that a discrimination claim such as that in your California example would be best addressed in the future under this federal hate crimes law, if passed?

These and many other questions and firsthand information would have to be explored in order to provide a professional evaluation of the particular example cited in your question. I do not have such knowledge and therefore cannot fairly and objectively opine on that specific case.

Unfortunately, the same ineffectiveness of state anti-bullying laws has been found in states where schools are required to have crisis plans. We have found outdated plans, plans with inadequate content, and other deficiencies in spite of states having requirements to meet certain expectations. Typically there is no state auditing or enforcement of such laws or requirements, and few incentives or resources for schools to implement them. In fact, federal and state school safety funds have been on the decline for the past decade, with schools competing for both time and money due to the intense and often narrow focus on pressures for improving academic performance. A 2007 General Accounting Office (GAO) report on school emergency planning also found deficiencies in school emergency planning in spite of state and federal requirements, publicized best practices, and resources provided in this area of school safety.

This leads me to think of other questions: If Congress pursues a federal anti-bullying law, will it also pursue federal laws requiring schools to have crisis plans? Will a law or laws also be created to require local schools to have each and every other component of a comprehensive school safety program, such as the more than dozen components outlined in my original testimony for this hearing? Efforts must not focus on one component such as bullying only or crisis planning only, but instead take a comprehensive framework and approach to federal, state, and local school safety policy and funding as discussed in more detail in my original testimony.

Enacting such extensive federal school safety laws would, in essence, establish national standards for K-12 school safety. Perhaps this is timely and worthy of discussion as the Department of Education has periodically suggested best practices but stopped short of delineating any firm regulations or standards. It would seem difficult and somewhat contradictory to establish such federal standards, however, at a time when funding to support implementation of such standards and mandates has continued to be cut by Congress and the Administrations over the past 10 years.

In fact, in your question, you alluded to the proposed elimination of state grant component of the federal Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) program. I was very disappointed that two days after the excellent July 8th, 2009, House Education and Labor joint Subcommittee hearing on strengthening school safety, a House Appropriations subcommittee approved eliminating the SDFSC state grant component funding. It is my understanding that the full House Appropriations Committee subsequently approved eliminating this program last week.

Eliminating this program as proposed and acted upon to date results in a net reduction of over $180 million in federal school safety funding, continuing a pattern in this and other programs of a decade-long declining o funding for school safety. If I understand your question correctly, the cut of the SDFSC state grant component would take away the "teeth" you referred to in your reference to threatening the removal of federal school safety funds. It was clear from my testimony and multiple other witnesses at the July 8th hearing that school safety resources need to be strengthened, not weakened, as would be done by another reduction in safe schools funding. I encourage you and your colleagues to continue to advocate for not only school safety policy, but also for restoring resources for school safety in the federal budget.

It is my understanding that you have also introduced The Increased Student Achievement Through Increased Student Support Act, a bill designed to increase the number of school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists in qualified schools in low-income communities. I support that bill as I believe the best strategy for making a meaningful impact on school bullying would be to increase the number of school counselors, social workers, and psychologists. Having more of these professionals on the front lines in our schools would provide adult professionals who could directly identify bullying incidents, provide immediate intervention, and prevent bullying and other school violence in our schools. The presence of professional adults providing direct services to children will have a much greater likelihood of making a meaningful impact on bullying than looking only at policies which are often not audited, enforced, or supported with resources.

In closing, I believe all students and school staff should be safe in school. Schools must develop comprehensive school safety programs. Most of all, resources must be restored to help schools develop and implement these programs to deal with the problems raised in the policies.

[Whereupon, at 12:02 p.m., the subcommittees were adjourned.]

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