

March 13, 2018

Dear Member of Congress:

AASA, The School Superintendents Association, representing more than 13,000 public school system leaders across the country, is deeply disappointed that we once again find ourselves, our nation, our schools, our students and our communities responding to yet another school shooting and recurring concerns about student safety while at school. We applaud Congress' efforts to address the important issue of school and student safety, and write today in response to the Students, Teachers, and Officers Preventing (STOP) School Violence Act of 2018, designed to fund school security improvements and invest in early intervention and prevention programs to stop school violence before it happens.

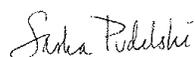
We are pleased to see both the Senate and the House come together in a bipartisan manner to address this important topic. While we are not able to endorse either bill in their current form, we write today to identify areas for improvement and to express our strong support for continuing to work with both chambers to improve the bill in its final form.

**Equal support for physical security provisions:** While we believe that school districts must prioritize ensuring their students are safe at all times, school districts cannot prevent gun violence within their walls by themselves. The authorization for funding that would assist districts in ensuring they have deterrent measures like surveillance equipment and locks, two-way radios and other emergency equipment, and training materials for school personnel would enable school districts to respond to growing school safety and security concerns in these tough fiscal times. Currently, the bill prioritizes funding for training and coordination with local law officials. These are notably important investments, but school districts must have broader flexibility to target these critical federal funds in the areas where need is greatest. While for some districts that may include training and coordination, for others-the priority may be in physical security provisions.

**Provision of Resources for Private Schools:** Both bills strike the word 'public' from the statute, expanding the program to support private schools and other non-public school settings. We support a revision to ensure that any resources made available to non-public school settings be funneled through an 'equitable services' provision, already in place through the Every Student Succeeds Act.

We urge Congress to continue to work together on this important legislation, which must be the first and not only, to address the physical safety of our students while in schools. We look forward to reviewing a revised version of the bill and hope it respects the need of local school system leaders to determine how to most appropriately allocate federal resources towards improving school safety.

Sincerely,



Sasha Pudelski  
Advocacy Director