

# MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS ACT OF 2013

## Senator Al Franken

One in five youth in the United States experience mental illness, and **70 percent of adolescents with mental health problems do not receive care**. Over the last two decades, suicide rates have doubled among Americans between the ages of 10 and 14, and 40 percent of currently unemployed parents say they have seen behavioral changes in their children due to their unemployment.

We know how to address these terrible facts. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration, **behavioral and emotional problems decreased among 31 percent of youth with mental health issues after 6 months of receiving mental health care**. Within one year of entering a mental health program, the school attendance rates of youth and their grades significantly. In addition, **the number of students involved in violent incidents decreased by 15 percent within three years of a school implementing a mental health program**. But despite this comprehensive evidence showing the importance of access to mental health and substance use disorder services, **many students struggle to access the care they need**.

**THE PROBLEM.** School staff can play an important role in helping to identify and support children with mental health problems. But in a time of tight state budgets for education, too often support services like school counselors end up on the chopping block. While the American School Counselor Association recommends employing one school counselor for every 250 students, in the 2010-2011 school year, the national average is was only one counselor for every 471 students.

**THE MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS ACT.** This legislation will expand access to mental health services in schools. It will establish a grant program to support schools that work with community-based organizations to expand access to mental health services for students. The grant program will also provide assistance to schools to train staff, volunteers, families, and other members of the community to recognize the signs of behavioral health problems in students and refer them for appropriate services. Under the legislation, SAMHSA will develop standardized quality measures and participating schools are required to collect and submit data on their programs and outcomes. The legislation authorizes \$200 million in grant funding per year over five years, and eligible schools may apply for up to \$1 million per grant year, based on the size of their student population.

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### Endorsements from the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress

Alliance for Children and Families  
American Counseling Association  
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry  
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy  
American Association of Pastoral Counselors  
American Association on Health and Disability  
American Dance Therapy Association  
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention/SPAN USA  
American Group Psychotherapy Association  
American Mental Health Counselors Association  
American Music Therapy Association  
American Nurses Association  
American Orthopsychiatric Association (Ortho)  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychoanalytic Association  
American Psychological Association  
American School Counselor Association  
American Society for Adolescent Psychiatry  
Anxiety Disorders Association of America  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare (AABH)  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Checkups at Columbia University -[Letter of Support](#)  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children & Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)  
Child Welfare League of America  
Clinical Social Work Association  
Confederation of Independent Psychoanalytic Societies  
Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)  
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action  
Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health  
TeenScreen National Center for Mental Health  
Learning Disabilities Association of America  
Mental Health America  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of Pupil Services Administrators (NAPSA)  
National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Directors of Special Education  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery  
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare  
National Disability Rights Network  
National Latino Behavioral Health Association (NLBHA)  
National PTA  
Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America  
School Social Work Association of America  
Therapeutic Communities of America  
Tourette Syndrome Association, Inc.  
US Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association  
-[Letter of Support](#)  
38th District Mental Health Consortium  
-[Letter of Support](#)  
Latino Behavioral Health Institute  
California School Health Centers  
-[Letter of Support](#)  
Arizona State University College of Nursing and Health Innovation  
-[Letter of Support](#)  
Hacienda-La Puente Unified School District  
-[Letter of Support](#)  
California Public Defenders Association  
-[Letter of Support](#)  
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychology  
-[Letter of Support](#)  
[The Ballas Foundation](#)