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July 10, 2019

Committee on Oversight and Reform  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our 3 million members and the 50 million students they serve, we would like to submit the following comments for the record in connection with the July 11 hearing, “Identifying, Preventing, and Treating Childhood Trauma: A Pervasive Public Health Issue that Needs Greater Federal Attention.”

We commend the committee for recognizing that childhood trauma is a real issue and exploring ways to deal with it. To gain insight into existing government support for children affected by trauma, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) conducted surveys and interviewed officials in six states as well as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. “Trauma is a widespread, harmful, and costly public health problem, and its effects are especially detrimental to children,” [GAO found](#). “While not every child who experiences trauma will suffer lasting effects, trauma significantly increases the risk of mental health problems, difficulties with social relationships and behavior, physical illness, and poor school performance.”

The Mental Health Services for Students Act of 2019 (H.R. 1109) by Rep. Grace Napolitano would expand access to school-based services and could help address the issues GAO has identified.

Thank you for calling attention to the vitally important issue of childhood trauma. We stand ready to work with you to address it.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association