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June 22, 2022

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 urge you to VOTE YES on the Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well-Being Act (H.R. 7666) and the Enhancing Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Through Campus Planning Act (H.R. 5407). Votes on these bills may be included in NEA's report card for the 117th Congress.

These bills begin to address the mental health crisis among students and educators struggling to be there for their students while coping with challenges of their own. H.R. 7666 would reauthorize critical federal programs that support mental health and address substance use disorders, and close a loophole that can make it difficult for public employees and their families to access the treatment they need. H.R. 5407 would promote positive mental health among college students and encourage comprehensive planning on college campuses to prevent suicide and other mental health crises.

The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the need for mental health care that was already in short supply. The latest Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data underscore the breadth of the crisis: In 2021, more than a third (37 percent) of high school students reported experiencing poor mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic, and 44 percent reported feeling persistently sad or hopeless during the past year.

Along with the need for student support, the educator shortage is growing—and threatening to get worse. According to a survey of NEA members released in February, 55 percent of educators are ready to leave the profession sooner than previously planned. A disproportionate number of those weighing their options are Black and Hispanic/Latino educators (62 percent and 59 percent, respectively), who are already under-represented in the profession.

Please VOTE YES on H.R. 7666 and H.R. 5407 to begin to address the mental health crisis among our nation's students and educators.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association