

August 1, 2007

The Honorable Phil Hare
1118 Longworth House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Hare:

The undersigned national organizations are pleased to offer our strong support for the Positive Behavior for Effective Schools Act of 2007. We share your goals of enhancing student outcomes and improving school climate through the promotion of school wide positive behavior supports (PBS). The legislation provides a welcomed opportunity to strengthen the education system by helping address student's social and emotional barriers to learning.

As you well know, school wide positive behavior support initiatives help reshape school climates into more conducive learning environments appreciated by students, staff and school personnel. School wide positive behavior supports help reduce discipline problems as well as improve academic outcomes, including test scores. Your home state of Illinois is a pioneer in creating a statewide comprehensive PBS initiative, with implementation in about 600 public schools and research demonstrating its support for school success.

The Positive Behavior for Effective Schools Act will go a long way towards fostering effective learning environments. It gives schools the tools and opportunity to change how schools respond to students, reinforce desired behaviors and eliminate inadvertent reinforcements for problem behavior to help realize the goals of academic and social success for all students. Specifically, the legislation allows and encourages schools and localities to support PBS as well as supports research, technical assistance and related school reform activities that improve school climate. Additionally, the legislation would establish a new office within the Department of Education that would help coordinate and administer activities assisting specialized instructional support personnel who provide a critical role in the link between social and academic outcomes for students.

Once again we applaud you for introducing this important legislation and look forward to working with you to secure its enactment.

Sincerely,

The Advocacy Institute
American Counseling Association
American Music Therapy Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Psychological Association

American School Counselor Association
The Arc of the United States
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders
Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Mental Health America
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Down Syndrome Congress
School Social Work Association of America
United Cerebral Palsy