



October 12, 2022

***UPDATED with new sign ons**

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: UPDATED 100 civil and human rights organizations and 221 Individuals from 41 States & DC sign joint Coalition Letter of opposition for the EAGLES Act (S.391/H.R. 1229)

****NOTE – original letter sent to Congress January 10, 2022 with 46 organizations signed on***

Dear Chair Durbin, Ranking Member Grassley, Chair Nadler, Ranking Member Jordan, Chair Scott and Ranking Member Foxx:

The **100 undersigned members and allies and 221 Individuals from 41 States and DC** of the Coalition for Smart Safety and the Federal School Discipline and Climate Coalition made up of civil and human rights organizations, write **in strong opposition to the EAGLES Act of 2021 (S. 391/H.R. 1229)**. The Coalition for Smart Safety includes disability rights, civil rights, education, and privacy organizations working together to stop the false association of gun violence and violence generally with psychiatric disability. The Federal School Discipline and Climate Coalition is a diverse group of organizations and individuals committed to advocating for federal legislative, budgetary, and administrative action to protect the interests and educational rights of Black and Brown students and youth through a racial justice and educational equity lens. Collectively, our coalitions have worked to ensure that federal policies are culturally-sustaining and foster positive learning environments for students and that these environments affirm the mental and physical safety of all students while protecting their civil rights.

Recent mass shootings in our nation’s schools have necessarily turned the spotlight on proposed policies and solutions at the legislative level. While the undersigned agree that public safety and

school safety is paramount, it cannot come at the expense of historically marginalized communities such as Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), people with disabilities, LGBTQ+, and people at the intersection of those identities. Bills such as the EAGLES Act will not keep all students safe. Instead, this bill will only serve to further isolate and stigmatize students as potential threats, which is neither helpful nor effective and will ultimately harm those students.

As our coalitions have communicated in writing before, we have major concerns with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) taking the lead on school safety initiatives. Once again, this legislation furthers a misguided view of school safety by providing another platform for DHS to lead on school safety. DHS, whose mission is primarily focused on counterterrorism and border security, is not the appropriate agency to lead school climate or safety efforts. Schools, educators, students, caregivers, and communities are in the best position to notice and address dangerous or violent behavior and support students in their journey through school. These stakeholders, in addition to guidance counselors, social workers, health professionals and other support professionals with support from state education agencies and the U.S. Department of Education, are best positioned to keep schools safe. DHS's time, resources, and expertise would be ill spent trying to lead the Federal Government's school safety efforts. It is also worth noting that this bill does not require any community stakeholder input which inevitably means that students and families, who will be most impacted by this bill, will have no opportunity to provide input on this policy. Federal policy must be informed and responsive to the people and communities who will be most affected by the policy

This bill would greatly entrench the use of school threat assessments, which are of great concern to us; the evidence regarding the efficacy of these practices is sparse at best. Additionally, the bill would also further entrench law enforcement in schools and open yet another potential federal funding stream for law enforcement in schools, which have no discernable impact on stopping violence or active shooting incidences in schools. Several studies and reports have shown that the presence of law enforcement in schools and the involvement of law enforcement in school based disciplinary proceedings increased rates of exclusionary discipline (e.g., suspension, expulsion, seclusion and restraint), which disproportionately impact students of color and students with disabilities.¹ This is in addition to an already troubling situation highlighted by the United States Commission on Civil Rights, which found that disciplinary measures in schools affect students of color and students with disabilities at higher rates than their peers.² This moment does not call for more threat assessments and law enforcement, but rather the opposite.

We know that schools, educators, caregivers, and communities are in the best position to notice and address concerning student behavior. Experts agree behavioral interventions are most effective at reducing behavioral problems when they incorporate educators' knowledge of their

¹ *We Came to Learn*, The Advancement Project, 2018 at: <https://advancementproject.org/wp-content/uploads/WCTLweb/docs/We-Came-to-Learn-9-13-18.pdf?reload=1536822360635>

² U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, "Beyond Suspensions: Examining School Discipline Policies and Connections to the School-to-Prison Pipeline for Students of Color with Disabilities" (July 2019) <https://www.usccr.gov/pubs/2019/07-23-Beyond-Suspensions.pdf>.

students, are non-punitive, and avoid removal from school.³ The U.S. Department of Education has a variety of evidenced based resources outlining effective discipline practices and strategies to address problematic behaviors in schools, emphasizing the need for positive behavior interventions and supports and finding that “[e]vidence-based, multi-tiered behavioral frameworks . . . can help improve overall school climate and safety.”⁴

Congress should focus their efforts on strategies that we know improve school climate such as providing funding for schools to build positive school cultures and alternatives to exclusionary discipline and criminalization. This could also include increased funding to hire more educators, guidance counselors, social workers, health professionals as well as other specialized personnel and providing funding for the implementation of restorative justice and culturally responsive practices. There are several pieces of legislations already introduced this Congress⁵ that we know would further positive school climate thus improving school safety without harming and traumatizing Black and Brown students or coming at the expense of students of color and students with disabilities.

Again, we **write in strong opposition to this bill** and **we urge you to abandon these efforts and instead craft policies that have been shown to create safe and inclusive schools for all children.** If you have any questions, please contact Cyrus Huncharek of National Down Syndrome Congress at cyrus@ndsccenter.org, Chris Scott of Open Society Policy Center at christopher.scott@opensocietyfoundations.org or Breon Wells of The Daniel Initiative at breon.wells@thedanielinitiative.com

Sincerely,

Organizations – signed on in January 2022: 46 organizations

Alliance for Educational Justice
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
AutCom (Autism National Committee)
Autistic People of Color Fund
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Autistic Women and Nonbinary Network
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Breaking Code Silence

³ “Interventions, school-wide and individual, that use proactive, preventative approaches, address the underlying cause or purpose of the behavior, and reinforce positive behaviors, have been associated with increases in academic engagement, academic achievement, and reductions in suspensions and school dropouts.” U.S. Department of Education, “School Climate and Discipline” (last updated Jan. 4, 2017) <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/index.html#suspension-101>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ [Keeping All Students Safe Act \(HR 3474/S.1878\)](#); [Protecting Our Students in Schools Act \(HR 3836/S.2029\)](#); [Counseling Not Criminalization Act \(HR 411/S.2125\)](#)

Center for Disability Rights
Center for Law and Education
Children’s Defense Fund
Connecticut Legal Rights Project
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates
Dignity in Schools Campaign
Disability Law Colorado
Disability Rights Advocates
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Florida Student Power Network
GLSEN
Gwinnett Parent Coalition to Dismantle the School to Prison Pipeline (Gwinnett SToPP)
Incarcerated Nation Network
life for pot
Michigan Teacher of the Year Network
National Action Network
National Association for Rights Protect and Advocacy
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment (National PLACE)
National Center for Youth Law
National Council of Churches
National Council on Independent Living
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
National Juvenile Justice Network
National Parents Union
Nollie Jenkins Family Center, Inc.
Open Society Policy Center
Parents Organized for Public Education
Rebuilding Independence My Style
Southern Poverty Law Center
SPAN Parent Advocacy Network
State Wide Education Organized Committee
Tennessee Mental Health Consumers’ Association
The Advocacy Institute
The Arc of the United States
The Coelho Center for Disability Law, Policy and Innovation
The Daniel Initiative
Uplift MN

Updated Letter October 2022: 54 organizations

A Little Piece of Light
Academy of the Stars, Inc.
Alliance of Rhode Island Southeast Asians for Education (ARISE)
Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools (AROS)
Alyssa Rodriguez Center for Gender Justice
American Youth Policy Forum
Autism Society of America
Black and Brown United in Action
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Center for LGBTQ Economic Advancement & Research (CLEAR)
Center for Popular Democracy
Citizen Action of New York
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Coalition for Juvenile Justice
COLAGE
Coleman Advocates for Children & Youth
College and Community Fellowship
Colorado Office of the Alternate Defense Counsel
CommunicationFIRST
Communities for Just Schools Fund
Easterseals
Elite Educational Consulting
Epilepsy Foundation
Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children
Family Voices
Feminist Majority Foundation
Fully Liberated Youth
Hispanic Federation
Justice Strategies
Justice Law Center
Keep The Promise Coalition
Leaders Igniting Transformation Action Fund
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Maine Parent Federation
Make the Road Nevada
Mirror Image Arts

Mississippi Coalition to End Corporal Punishment
 National Black Women's Justice Institute
 National Down Syndrome Congress
 National Women's Law Center
 Neutral Zone
 Parent to Parent of Georgia, Inc
 Policing and Social Justice Project
 PTI Nebraska (Parent Training and Information)
 RACCE
 Show and Tell
 Strategies for Youth
 Student Advocacy Center of Michigan
 Teaching for Change
 The Choice Program at UMBC
 The Gault Center
 The Parents' Place of MD
 Vermont Family Network

Individuals signed on: 221 from 41 states and the District of Columbia (DC)

***Listed First Name, Last Name – State/DC**

Carey	Andrzejewski	AL
Natalie	Clark	AR
Barbara	Brinkley	AR
Judy	Whitehouse	AZ
Lois	Jordan	AZ
Gerry	Milliken	AZ
Fred	Oswald	AZ
Kevin	Petty	AZ
JL	Angell	CA
Terry	Blount	CA
Laurel	Cameron	CA
Allan	Campbell	CA
Carol	Crooks	CA
Jorge	De Cecco	CA
Ann	Dorsey	CA
Michael W	Evans	CA
Nicole	Fountain	CA

Gilda	Fusilier	CA
c	g	CA
Frances	Goff	CA
Daniel	Goldberg	CA
Christopher	Hamilton	CA
Karla	Henderson	CA
Laura	Herndon	CA
winifred	hopkins	CA
Martin	Horwitz	CA
John	Martinez	CA
Carol	Moss	CA
John	Oda	CA
Robert	Reed	CA
joe	smith	CA
Pela	Tomasello	CA
Leon	Van Steen	CA
Richard	Bahr	CA
Stacie	Charlebois	CA
Luis	Lozano	CA
Rashid	Patch	CA
Kristine	Andarmani	CA
Ben	Brucker	CA
Judi	Burle	CA
Conor	McGarry	CA
Constance	Howes	CO
Brad	Jolly	CO
Richard	Creswell	CO
JoLynn	Jarboe	CO
Leslie	Lomas	CO
Julie	Rada	CO
Natalie	Baddour	CO
IIZ	Cosgrove	CT
Barbara	Sorgeler	DE
Deborah	Cooney	FL
Maggie	Davidson	FL
Gail	Flanders	FL
Cheryl	Gaiefsky	FL
Terry	Gomoll	FL
Mari	Mennel-Bell	FL
Sarah	Mullins	FL

jean	buchanan andrews	FL
Judith	Ford	FL
Susan	Hubbard-Reeves	FL
Ruth	Steger	FL
Mark	Koritz	GA
Allister	Layne	GA
Jacqui	Skill	HI
Alexander	Honigsblum	IA
Nathaniel	Role	ID
Ellen	Domke	IL
John	Obeda	IL
Angelo	Sturino	IL
Sharon	Baker	IN
Suzanne	M.	KS
Chad	Landry	LA
Connie	Lewis	LA
David	Dragon	MA
Heather	Ford	MA
D'Anna	Fortunato	MA
Amy	Henry	MA
Eileen	Prefontaine	MA
Gary	Thaler	MA
Nancy	Woolley	MA
Ailsa	Hermann-Wu	MA
Kate	Hermann-Wu	MA
r	Tippens	MA
Maureen	McCarthy	MA
Sydney	Pierce	MA
Connie	Chow	MA
Linda	Murphy	MD
Robin	Dumler	MD
Melissa	Goemann	MD
Kelly	Quinn	MD
Christopher	Scott	MD
Michael	MacPherson	ME
Hugh	Gurney	MI
Sandra	Williams	MI
Bonnie	Billups	MI
Deb	Gordon-Gurfinkel	MI
gail	wolkoff	MI

Melissa	VerDuin	MI
Laura	Adam	MN
Ruth	Heller	MN
Hector	Reillo	MN
Barbara	Bergeron	MN
Zoe	Bird	MN
Mary	Faulkner	MN
GLORIA	FOOKS	MO
Harold	Watson	MO
Janice	Harper	MS
Janice	Harper	MS
Janice	Harper	MS
Jan	Hillegas	MS
Sister	Boschert	MS
Wayne	Mortimer	MT
Tracy	Feldman	NC
Jacqueline	Knable	NC
Lawrence	East	NC
Rita	Mullis	NC
Frank	DiDonato	NJ
Donna	Edwards	NJ
Bharat	Adarkar	NJ
betsy	cousins-coleman	NJ
Josette	Jackson	NJ
Denise	Lytle	NJ
Raymond	Valinoti	NJ
Karen	Boehler	NM
Emily	Holcomb	NM
Michael	Gregory	NM
g	clemson	NV
Jo Ann	McGreevy	NY
Susan	Castelli-Hill	NY
Peg	Coogan	NY
David	Elman	NY
Mark	Forsyth	NY
Bettina	Goodall	NY
Amy	Harlib	NY
Juan	Miguel	NY
Peggy	Moran	NY
Gail	Moran	NY

Gabriella	Mucilli	NY
Veronica	Schweyen	NY
Sister Joan	Agro	NY
Gabriel	Arkles	NY
Rebecca	Berlant	NY
Don	Doornbos	NY
Ruth	Falcon	NY
Claire	Fishman	NY
Bobbie	Flowers	NY
Germaine	Gogel	NY
Gabriel	Gomes	NY
Frederick	Hecker	NY
Kara	Huberman	NY
Elaine	Livingston	NY
Sharon	Longyear	NY
Candice	Lowery	NY
Alex	Stavis	NY
Imani	Webb-Smith	NY
Samuel	Zucker	NY
Mary	Duerksen	OH
Justin	Philipps	OH
Aloysius	Wald	OH
Erin	Znidar	OH
Bruce	Ente	OH
Barbara	Hoch	OH
Calvin	Rittenhouse	OH
Charlotta	Ball	OR
Anna	Cowen	OR
Sandra	Joos	OR
Maureen	O'Neal	OR
BC	Shelby	OR
Pamela	Vasquez	OR
Caley	Ream	OR
Debra	Rehn	OR
JAY	RICHARDS	OR
Brent	Rocks	OR
Nadia	Sindi	OR
Nancy	Boyd	OR
Dona	Ward	OR
Thomas	Josephi	PA

James	Keenan	PA
Paul	Palla	PA
Paz	Paulsen-Sacks	PA
Emily	Pitner	PA
John	Rohrer	PA
Pamela	Harbin	PA
Susan	Saltzman	PA
Bob	O'Neil	RI
Tony	Wise	SC
Eric	Robinson	TN
Grady	Warren	TN
Kathryn	Burns	TX
Thomas	Nieland	TX
Dallas	Windham	TX
Shirlene	Harris	TX
Bill	Holt	TX
James	Klein	TX
Gary	Hull	UT
Juanita	Hull	UT
Victor	Escobar	VA
Michael	Pan	VA
Steven	Vogel	VA
Breon	Wells	VA
Keith	Everton	VA
Erica	Andrus	VT
Josephine	Lowrey	VT
Susan	Detato	VT
Glen	Anderson	WA
Barbara	Blackwood	WA
Tika	Bordelon	WA
Suzann	Finch	WA
Ku	Lambros	WA
Virgene	Link-New	WA
Mary	Reeves	WA
Robert	Brown	WA
Meryle	Korn	WA
Victoria	Urias	WA
Anne	Hepfer	WA
Elena	Rumiantseva	WA
Deanna	Richardson	WI

Dave	Searles	WI
Whitney	Metz	WV
Joanne	Hesselink	Country — USA*
Dara	Baldwin	DC

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Description of FedSDC:

FedSDC is a diverse group of organizations and individuals committed to advocating for legislative and federal action to protect the interests and educational rights of Black and Brown students and youth through a racial justice and educational equity lens. We advocate that all children deserve to go to schools that create environments and experiences that help them to succeed. Establishing police-free schools and ending the use of seclusion, harmful and dangerous restraints, and corporal punishment while implementing effective, non-punitive, and culturally sustaining practices in schools and alternatives to school discipline is a core value for FedSDC.

**Note the organizations come from around the country as well.*

CA Individuals = 33

CC: Rep. Ted Deutch – sponsor H.R. 1229 – FL Individuals = 11

Chairman Jerry Nadler – House Judiciary Committee – NY = 29

Ranking Member Jim Jordan – House Judiciary Committee – OH = 7

Chairman Bobby Scott – House Ed and Labor Committee – VA = 5

Ranking Member Virginia Foxx – House Ed and Labor Committee - NC = 4

Senator Chuck Grassley – sponsor of S. 391- IA = 1

Chairman Dick Durbin – Senate Judiciary Committee – IL = 3

Ranking Member Sen. Grassley - Senate Judiciary Committee – IA = 1

All House of Representatives Chiefs of Staff (COS)

All Senate Chiefs of Staff (COS)

House Judiciary Committee Staff

House Ed and Labor Committee Staff

Senate Judiciary Committee Staff

Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pension (HELP) Committee Staff – WA = 12
White House Domestic Policy Council