

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

28 March 2019

Dear Colleagues,

22-member organizations of the **Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG)** have formally endorsed the Threat Assessment, Prevention, and Safety Act (H.R. 838/S.265):

The undersigned organizations, members of the Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG) and representing the mental health and substance use disorder community, are pleased to support your bipartisan and bicameral legislation, "The Threat Assessment, Prevention, and Safety (TAPS) Act of 2019 (H.R.838/S.265)." Your legislation is an excellent first step toward addressing our shared concern about increasing violence in our communities.

It is our understanding that your legislation creates a multidisciplinary national task force of experts who will work in a public-private partnership to recommend national guidelines for behavior-based threat assessment and management and to support communities. The purpose of your legislation is laudable – to engage these national experts and community leaders to develop guidelines to share information about potential threats, without threatening patient privacy or individual rights. We are especially pleased that the legislation does not perpetuate the myth that people with mental illness are those most likely to perpetuate societal violence and that the legislation does not otherwise stigmatize those with mental illness.

As mental health professionals, we believe that your legislation is stronger because it includes collaboration and consultation with mental health service professionals with clinical experience to advise the national strategy. We stand ready to work with you to share our expertise and advice. While there is no absolute way to predict all violent behavior, we applaud the goal of seeking to identify imminent threats and seek proper action, often including social services or sometimes mental health interventions. These provisions evidence your clear intention to respect and engage mental health professionals, where appropriate, to proactively seek to prevent threats of imminent violence.

For these reasons, we strongly support "The Threat Assessment, Prevention, and Safety (TAPS) Act of 2019 (H.R.838/S.265)" and offer our assistance in moving these bills to final passage. Please call upon any of our organizations to help you in these efforts.

American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work

American Dance Therapy Association

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

American Group Psychotherapy Association

American Psychoanalytic Association

Anxiety and Depression Association of America

Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare

Clinical Social Work Association

College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists (CPNP)

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice

NAMI - National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Association for Rural Mental Health

National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD)

National Board for Certified Counselors

National Council for Behavioral Health

National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

National Register of Health Service Psychologists

Sandy Hook Promise

The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health

The Psychotherapy Action Network (PsiAN)

Treatment Communities of America

For more information on the TAPS Act, please contact Lauren.Ziegler@mail.house.gov or Steve.J@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



Brian Babin, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Val Demings
Member of Congress