



March 18, 2019

The Honorable Brian Babin
U.S. House of Representatives
2236 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Val Demings
U.S. House of Representatives
217 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Babin and Demings:

We are writing in support of H.R.838, the Threat Assessment, Prevention, and Safety (TAPS) Act of 2019, your legislation to create a multidisciplinary task force of experts to recommend national guidelines for behavior-based threat assessment and management.

We are among the family members whose loved ones were killed in the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School that took the lives of 20 precious first-graders and 6 of their dedicated educators on December 14, 2012. Together, we formed Sandy Hook Promise, a national nonprofit committed to preventing school violence before it happens. We deliver our no-cost, evidence-based “Know the Signs” programs to schools in every state across the country to train students and adults about the warning signs of violence and self-harm and the how to intervene to stop a potential tragedy. We have trained over 6.5 million youth and adults and numerous averted school shooting, suicide, and other violent threats.

While there is no single law that can put an end to gun violence and school violence, we know that there are often signs and signals before an act of violence occurs, and with the right tools, we can recognize those signs and intervene to stop a tragedy. In 4 out of 5 school shootings, at least one other person had knowledge of the attacker's plan but failed to report it, and 70% of people who commit suicide tell someone of their plans or give some other type of warning signs. That's why we must ensure that every school and every student is trained about these warning signs and how to act to get help.

Among Sandy Hook Promise's proven “Know the Signs” programs is our school threat assessment training, Safety Assessment and Intervention (SAI). SAI trains multi-disciplinary teams – such as school crisis teams – within a school district how to recognize the signs of threatening behavior before it escalates to violence or self-harm. SAI is not only proven to help schools triage and address threats to successfully protect students, it has also been shown to create a more supportive school climate with reductions in suspensions and expulsions and increases in parental involvement.

H.R.838 would take the critical step of forming a multi-disciplinary task force of experts to recommend much-needed national guidelines for behavior-based threat assessment and management. We know that threat assessment can save lives, and this bill would help schools, workplaces, and communities across our country to adopt proven threat assessment models to prevent tragedies before they happen.

We are proud to support the Threat Assessment, Prevention, and Safety (TAPS) Act of 2019 and urge its swift passage. Together, we can protect our children and communities from violence.

Sincerely,



Mark Barden
(Daniel's father)



Nicole Hockley
(Dylan's mom)