

For Immediate Release

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Senator Robert Casey Introduces Bill to Add Counselors to Schools

WASHINGTON, DC- U.S. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) today introduced the Put School Counselors Where They're Needed Act which aims to put more counselors in struggling secondary schools. The bill (S. 3347) would create a competitive grant program under No Child Left Behind to help reduce the drop out rates at low performing secondary schools.

“One of many challenges secondary school counselors face today is ensuring that every student receives the individualized support he or she needs,” said Senator Casey. “Low-performing secondary schools need our help to make sure they have enough counselors on staff so all students are given the opportunity to succeed.”

Currently, the average counselor-to-student ratio in America's public schools is one to 476, which hardly allows for individual attention and intensive support. The American School Counselor Association and the American Counseling Association recommend one school counselor for every 250 students for all schools and an even lower ratio for counselors working primarily with students at risk.

The Put School Counselors Where They're Needed Act would:

- Require the Secretary of Education to create a demonstration project under which the Secretary makes grants available on a competitive basis to secondary schools that have a drop out rate of 40% or higher.
- Provide funds for additional school counselors to identify students who are at risk of not graduating in 4 years. These additional counselors would also work intensively with students and would collaborate with parents, teachers and others to create a comprehensive plan to help at risk students.
- Include a sense of Congress that a secondary school that receives a grant should aim to provide 1 additional counselor per 250 students at risk, the recommended ratio of the American School Counselor Association and the American Counseling Association.

- Allow any additional resources to be used to supplement, rather than supplant funds from available non-federal sources.
- Provide for demonstration projects to be implemented in no less than 10 schools. The first 5 schools selected to participate should each be located in a different state.
- Authorize \$6 million a year for four years and mandate that only schools able to increase their graduation rates by an average of 2.5% per year are able to renew their grants.

This bill is a Senate companion to H.R.3439, the Put School Counselors Where They're Needed Act, introduced by Representative Linda Sanchez (D-CA).

This bill is supported by the National PTA, the American School Counselor Association, the American Counseling Association and the National Association of College Admissions Counselors.

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