
EDUCATION & LABOR COMMITTEE

Congressman George Miller, Chairman

Wednesday, July 8, 2009
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**Chairman Kildee Statement At Joint Subcommittee Hearing
On Strengthening School Safety through Prevention of
Bullying**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – *Below are the prepared remarks of U.S. Rep. Dale Kildee (D-MI), chairman of the Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee for a joint subcommittee hearing on “Strengthening School Safety through Prevention of Bullying” with the Healthy Families and Communities Subcommittee.*

I’m pleased to welcome my fellow subcommittee members, the members of the Healthy Families and Communities Subcommittee, the public, and our witnesses to this hearing on “Strengthening School Safety through Prevention of Bullying.”

As a father, a grandfather, and a former teacher, I believe there is nothing more important than ensuring the safety of our school children.

Yet, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, more than 75 percent of our nation’s schools experienced a violent incident last school year.

These incidents – which range from bullying to gang activity – threaten the safety of our children and seriously compromise the learning environment.

While one incident is one too many, we must do something immediately to address this widespread problem.

We must better understand the causes of school violence and give our educators the tools they need to protect children from dangerous situations.

A safe learning environment is an essential component of a successful and high-achieving school.

During today’s hearing, we will hear testimony from a student and parent who have witnessed bullying firsthand, from experts in the field who train educators and prepare school districts to address the problems of school violence, and from a student who helps

lead a successful school safety program in her own high school.

Each perspective represents an important voice in this discussion.

We will hear about the importance of student and parent engagement, teacher training, development of emergency preparedness plans, community engagement, and the collection of accurate data.

All of these pieces play a critical role in a comprehensive approach to school safety.

We will also hear about the importance of teaching positive behavioral skills such as self management, self awareness, and responsible decision-making. These social and emotional skills contribute to conflict resolution, reducing violent behavior in school settings.

I look forward to the testimony today and working with Chairwoman McCarthy, Ranking Members Platts and Castle, and all the members of the committee as we work to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and explore other critical school safety policies.

I now yield to Ranking Member Castle for his opening statement.

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