



AMERICAN COUNSELING ASSOCIATION

September 22, 2010

The Honorable George Miller
Chair
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Miller:

On behalf of the American Counseling Association (ACA), the nation's largest non-profit organization representing school counselors and other professional counselors working in diverse settings, I write in strong support of the Protecting Student Athletes from Concussions Act. This important legislation would establish minimum standards for concussion safety and management in K-12 schools, and help educate school personnel, parents and students to recognize and respond to concussions.

Brain injuries like concussions pose serious threats to students' mental and physical health, and can greatly impact students' ability to engage in learning and achieve academically. These mental health and academic ramifications are often overlooked, and yet are inextricably linked with the physical health and well-being of the student. Concussions can create medical, cognitive, social, and psychological disruptions for the victim, all of which can jeopardize academic success.

Fortunately, credentialed school counselors, school nurses, school social workers, school psychologists and other specialized instructional support personnel (SISP) stand at the ready to help schools recognize, reduce, and more safely and effectively respond to concussions and other brain injuries. Schools need a strong team of these professionals to enable students and teachers to overcome these and other barriers to learning, and help schools succeed by working in areas including bullying prevention, school climate assessment and programming, positive behavior intervention and supports, college and career readiness, and more.

ACA thanks you for championing the Protecting Student Athletes from Concussions Act and holding a hearing on this important issue. We welcome the opportunity work with you on this and other legislation to ensure that students get the supports and services they need to succeed in school.

If we can be of assistance in your work, please have your staff contact Dominic Holt in the ACA Office of Public Policy and Legislation at (703) 823-9800, ext. 242, or dholt@counseling.org.

Sincerely,

Marcheta P. Evans, PhD, LPC-S, NCC
President
American Counseling Association