



FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

## Congress of the United States House of Representatives

January 28, 2009

Dear Colleague,

Accounts of teacher sexual misconduct have inundated headlines across the country. In 2004, a study required by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 reported that an estimated 4.5 million children are subject to sexual misconduct by a school employee sometime between kindergarten and 12th grade – that’s nearly 1 in every 10 students that are targets of sexual misconduct during their school career. As far as I’m concerned, that’s one too many.

Further, a 2007 seven-month AP investigation found a total of 2,570 educators across the nation were punished for sexual misconduct from 2001-05, representing about a quarter of all educator misconduct cases in that time period. At least 446 of the cases that the AP found involved educators who had multiple victims. The system we currently have in place has failed our students - repeatedly. This is why I have reintroduced the Student Protection Act.

The Student Protection Act requires uniform reporting requirements for eligible employees (of a SEA, LEA, public or private school) accused of sexual misconduct against a student, consistent with established guidelines for reporting child abuse; it requires a central body in each state to be responsible for receiving and investigating allegations of sexual misconduct by school employees; and it creates a nationwide database of school employees sanctioned by the state for sexual misconduct – thus enabling state, local, and private school officials to ensure offenders remain out of the classroom.

More than a dozen states have considered legislation to strengthen laws for the screening and reporting of sexual misconduct by educators last year – many of which became law. However, without adopting systematic policies and procedures at the national level all states remain vulnerable when hiring educators from states with mediocre reporting procedures and lackluster ethical standards. Our classrooms deserve much more than a piecemeal effort that leaves our nation’s school children exposed to predators moving from state to state to avoid prosecution.

We have a unique opportunity before us to empower educators and parents nationwide and make it crystal clear we will not allow those who would prey on young, vulnerable minds to compromise the integrity of our school system and tarnish an honorable profession.

I hope you will consider co-sponsoring this important legislation. If you have any questions or would like to become a cosponsor of the Student Protection Act, please contact Brooke McKnight at 5-1252 or [brooke.mcknight@mail.house.gov](mailto:brooke.mcknight@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Adam H. Putnam".

Adam H. Putnam  
Member of Congress