

COMMITTEES:

ARMED SERVICES

SUBCOMMITTEES:
READINESS

SEAPOWER AND PROJECTION FORCES

AGRICULTURE

SUBCOMMITTEES:
GENERAL FARM COMMODITIES AND
RISK MANAGEMENT
LIVESTOCK, DAIRY, AND POULTRY

ETHICS



Joe Courtney
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December 18th, 2012

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman, Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable George Miller
Ranking Member, Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Miller:

As an incoming member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, I urge you to make school safety a priority of the Committee in the 113th Congress. After the tragic events that transpired on school grounds in Colorado, Virginia and now Newtown, Connecticut, it is clear that we must sharpen our focus on the safety of our students at all levels of education.

Speaking with local educators in Newtown and in communities all across Connecticut, I can attest to the overwhelming desire for help – in evaluating their own school safety plans and in deciding whether to invest in new security technology and personnel. Our committee can help in that area by holding hearings on the “best practices” school districts are using and by facilitating input from the U.S. Department of Education. In addition, I hope we can fashion a legislative response to authorize systems of information sharing to protect schools and students across our nation.

The urgent need for our Committee to take up this issue is particularly highlighted by the events in Newtown. Newtown is not a distressed community, economically or sociologically. It has high quality leadership and staffing, and yet it too was a scene of mass casualties. If a community like Newtown is vulnerable, then few school systems in America are truly safe. Our Committee should not stand by such an unacceptable state of affairs.

We need to focus on protecting the school environment and maintaining an atmosphere where students and faculty feel safe – particularly at a time when local school budgets are already strained. As a Committee, we need to focus on a comprehensive approach to school safety, one

that provides teachers, administrators, and school officials with the tools they need to address safety threats at every level.

As President Obama said at the Newtown High School on Sunday, December 16th, 2012, we must honor the actions of the teachers, principals, families, first responders, and caregivers who rose to the challenge during this tragedy by acting ourselves – now – to address this important issue. To this end, I look forward to working with you both, and our colleagues on the Committee, to focus on evaluating current school safety procedures to ensure that each and every school in our nation has comprehensive emergency response-and-prevention measures in place.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Courtney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end of the name.

JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress