



Statements of Support for the *Closing Health Coverage Gaps for Public Servants Act*

Introduced by Rep. Katie Porter (D-CA), Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-MI), Sen. Chris Murphy (D-CT), and Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)

“It’s no secret that the work of educators is harder than ever, with increased stress, shortages, and political interference and attacks. We need to support them by giving them the resources to deal with their own trauma and the lingering effects of an extremely difficult two years. Senators Murphy and Stabenow and Representatives Porter and Dingell are helping to address this necessity by introducing the *Closing Health Coverage Gaps for Public Servants Act*, which helps provide educators access to the mental health support they and their families need,” **said American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten.**

“At a time in U.S. history when we have more than 100,000 people a year dying of drug overdoses, dire warnings about a youth mental health crisis from our Surgeon General, and clear data on the increasing prevalence of mental health disorders in adults, it is unfathomable to me that we still have major public employers opting out of parity,” **said former U.S. Rep. Patrick J. Kennedy, founder of The Kennedy Form and lead author of the 2008 *Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act*.** “It’s time for state and local governments to walk the walk, not just talk the talk about whole-person health. Most Americans can’t afford to get help without equitable insurance coverage for mental health and addiction treatment. We need to right this wrong now.”

“The choice to have a mastectomy and to feel comfortable post-mastectomy, whether that is through breast reconstruction or not, is something deeply personal for many breast cancer patients and we believe that needs to be decided by the patient and their provider, not by insurance coverage,” **said Molly Guthrie, Senior Director for Public Policy and Advocacy at Susan G. Komen.** “All breast cancer patients should have the right to full mastectomy care including reconstruction or custom breast prostheses without burdensome cost-sharing requirements. We’re grateful for Senator Murphy and Representative Porter’s leadership in removing barriers to reconstruction for all patients regardless of insurance type.”

“For many years, people with mental health conditions could not get insurance coverage for their mental health treatment,” **said Daniel H. Gillison, Jr., CEO, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).** “Despite federal parity laws now in place, some state and local government health plans can opt out of mental health parity and other important health protections. This means that some frontline workers like police, firefighters and teachers don’t benefit from the protections of the mental health parity law. NAMI applauds Sen. Murphy for introducing this legislation to close this loophole and make sure more people get the mental health coverage they need.”