



FIGHTING *for* PENNSYLVANIA FAMILIES

Promoting Responsible Emergency Protocols (PREP) For All Students Act

U.S. Senator Bob Casey

All students should feel safe and protected in their learning environments regardless of age, developmental stage, and ability. As communities adapt to the intensifying effects of climate change and face a rise of on-campus violence, safety recommendations for schools and child care facilities must evolve to integrate the needs of young children and youth with disabilities. This is not a trivial concern: During the 2020-2021 school year, the number of students ages 3-21 who received special education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was 7.2 million students, or 15 percent of all public school students. These numbers are projected to increase, as schools rise to meet the distinctive needs of students post-pandemic.

Many existing emergency protocols are designed with a one-size-fits all approach, and do not adequately account for the unique needs of children at various developmental stages or persons with disabilities. It is critical that, as schools continue to develop protocols to respond to emergency events, their policies are inclusive to meet the needs of all children.

The **PREP for All Students Act** ensures that public schools, early child care education centers, and institutions of higher education have the tools they need to develop inclusive emergency preparedness protocols. Specifically, the bill would:

- Establish a Federal Advisory Council composed of federal agencies, youth with disabilities and mental health considerations, parents, educators and advocates, to develop guidelines and recommendations for the implementation of accessible, developmentally appropriate, culturally aware, and trauma-informed emergency preparedness protocols in early child care and education centers, public schools and institutions of higher education.
- Require the Council to submit a report to Congress that includes, but is not limited to, information about trauma-informed preparedness drills, emergency communications, the use of school safety technology and training for training for educators, early childcare and education staff, administrators and support personnel, including training addressing racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, religious, and disability implicit biases and other training to ensure the nondiscriminatory application of protocols and treatment of students
- Ensure that schools are provided with accurate information about the needs of specific populations of children, youth, and employees during emergency events.

Supporting Organizations: Access Living, American Association of People with Disabilities, The Arc of the United States, Autistic Self Advocacy Network, Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates, Institute for Childhood Preparedness, Little Lobbyists, National Association of the Deaf, National Association for the Education of Young Children, National Council on Independent Living, National Disability Rights Network, National Down Syndrome Congress, and Sandy Hook Promise.