

April 25, 2023

Dear Representative Fleischmann,

I am writing to express my concern for your seeming lack of dedication to funding mental health services, particularly in light of the recent tragedy at Covenant Presbyterian School. Your efforts to support mental health resources have been minimal, and I am convinced that key legislation on the federal level could have had a positive impact on our Tennessee community.

I would like to urge you to consider giving your support to future bills that support similar legislation as did Bill H.R.1638, the "Mental Health Services for Students Act of 2021." This important legislation would have provided funding for mental health services in schools, including training for school staff, crisis intervention teams, and support for students in need.

In September, I had the opportunity to meet with you as part of the group from Southern Adventist University to discuss H.R. 7037, which aimed to increase resources to fund school social workers. Since then, I have been encouraged by your professed support of mental health initiatives as seen in your standard email reply to other concerned constituents in response to school shootings.

As we have seen all too often in recent years, school shootings and other acts of violence are often linked to mental health issues that have gone untreated. By providing adequate mental health resources in schools, we can help to identify and address these issues before they escalate into tragedy.

I believe that supporting bills like Bill H.R.1638 is an important step towards creating safer and more supportive learning environments for students, and I hope that your email response to my friends means that you will now consider lending your support to future important legislation supporting school social workers.

Thank you for your continued dedication to our community and for your commitment to improving our schools and their safety. With your help, we can protect our students by improving mental health interventions in our schools and supporting our Tennessee mental health providers.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Laura Gibbs