



21 July 2021

The Honorable Robert C. Scott  
Chairman  
Committee on Education and Labor  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Virginia A. Foxx  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Education and Labor  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patricia L. Murray  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Health, Education,  
Labor & Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard M. Burr  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Health, Education,  
Labor & Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Scott, Chairwoman Murray, Representative Foxx, and Senator Burr,

The undersigned organizations write to you to express our support for H.R. 2525/S. 774, the “Report and Educate About Campus Hazing (REACH) Act,” and urge the Committee to consider and favorably report the REACH Act to the House and Senate floor for a vote. The bill, introduced by a bipartisan group of lawmakers, would promote campus safety and be an invaluable tool in hazing prevention efforts - keeping students safe and alive at school.

Fifty-five percent of college students involved in clubs, teams, and organizations experience hazing.<sup>1</sup> Hazing is a threat to the health and safety of students due to its intimidating, harassing, and often violent nature.<sup>2</sup> At extremes, hazing is lethal. In March of 2007, Gary and Julie DeVercelly’s son, Gary DeVercelly Jr., died as a result of hazing at Rider University. As board members with Clery Center, they have been tireless advocates to ensure no parents have to experience this unbearable—and preventable—loss. Tragically, hazing continues to have a lasting impact on individuals, families, and communities across the country.

In the first quarter of 2021 alone, three more young-adult lives were tragically lost due to alleged hazing incidents, including James Gilfedder of California and student at Lyon College in Arkansas, Adam Oakes of Virginia and student at Virginia Commonwealth University, and Stone Foltz of Ohio and student at Bowling Green State University.

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<sup>1</sup> Allan, E. J., & Madden, M. (2008). Hazing in view: College students at risk.  
<https://stophazing.org/research/national-hazing-study-hazing-in-view/>

<sup>2</sup> StopHazing Research Lab. (2020, December). Hazing: The Issue. StopHazing Consulting.  
<https://www.stophazing.org/intersections>

While a hazing-related death has occurred, on average, every year since the mid-1900s, state anti-hazing laws are uneven at best and sometimes non-existent. Only 44 of the 50 states have a hazing-related statute and there is currently no universal requirement for colleges or universities to collect and publish information on reports of hazing or related policies. The state in which a student chooses to attend college should not dictate their safety in regard to hazing.

The REACH Act works to remedy these issues by creating a nationwide standardized definition of hazing, including hazing incidents as crime statistics in Annual Security Reports (ASRs) under the Jeanne Clery Act, and requiring that colleges and universities provide evidence-informed hazing prevention education to their communities in an effort to prevent such incidents. This bill is clear, concise, and creates transparency and consistency across all postsecondary institutions. The more time that passes before legislation is enacted, the more likely it is that students will be harmed and even killed by these senseless acts.

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, thank you for taking the time to consider our views on this piece of legislation and we urge the Committee to consider and favorably report the REACH Act. If you have any questions or if we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to Meredith Stewart with StopHazing at [meredith@stophazing.org](mailto:meredith@stophazing.org) or [outreach@stophazing.org](mailto:outreach@stophazing.org), or Jessica Mertz with Clery Center at [jmertz@clerycenter.org](mailto:jmertz@clerycenter.org).

Sincerely,

StopHazing  
Clery Center  
SAFE Campuses, LLC  
AHA! Movement  
American Association of Suicidology  
America's Promise Alliance  
Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA)  
Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors  
Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors  
Bolster Collaborative, Inc.  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
End Rape On Campus  
It's On Us  
National Association of People Against Bullying  
National College Athlete Honor Society, Inc.  
National Council for Mental Wellbeing  
National Education Association  
National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA)  
National Women's Law Center  
NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation  
Positive Coaching Alliance  
Public Justice  
Robert D Champion Drum Major for Change Foundation  
Soteria Solutions

Stop Bullying Now Foundation Inc.

The Jed Foundation

The Youth Mental Health Project

Timothy J. Piazza Center for Fraternity and Sorority Research and Reform

Tyler Clementi Foundation

Ujima Inc: The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community

VTV Family Outreach Foundation, Inc.

ZeroNow