

# PROTECTING OUR STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS ACT OF 2021

## THE EFFECTS OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOLS

Every day, in nearly twenty states across the country, students are at risk of being subjected to corporal punishment, or the act of inflicting physical pain as a form of discipline. This disgraceful practice can result in serious physical injury, including abrasions, broken bones, bruising, hematomas, and other medical complications, and it can cause damaging long-term outcomes. Research has linked the practice in schools to poor academic performance, physical and emotional harm, and damage to students' self-esteem and to their trust with educators.

In addition to being both deeply harmful and ineffective, corporal punishment is disproportionately applied to students of color and students with disabilities. Research demonstrates that Black male students are approximately twice as likely to be subjected to corporal punishment as white male students, and Black female students are three times as likely as white female students. Furthermore, students with disabilities are struck at higher rates than students without disabilities; nearly 15 percent of all students corporally punished are students with disabilities.

## THE PROTECTING OUR STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS ACT

Corporal punishment has no place in our nation's schools, and many states have failed to end this practice, subjecting their students to continued harm. Federal leadership is desperately needed to end this practice once and for all, and our bicameral legislation, the Protecting Our Students in Schools Act of 2021, achieves that goal.

The Protecting Our Students in Schools Act of 2021 would prohibit the practice of corporal punishment in any school which receives federal funding, and would establish a series of important and much-needed enforcement protections for students and families.

Specifically, the bill:

- Prohibits the practice of corporal punishment in any school that receives federal funding;
- Establishes numerous enforcement protections, including a private right of action, the involvement of the attorney general and the Office for Civil Rights, and a series of rigorous reporting requirements for states and school districts;
- Invests in states and school districts by establishing a grant program to improve school climate and culture by implementing positive, proactive measures, including positive behavioral interventions and supports, trauma-informed care, restorative justice interventions, implicit bias training, multi-tiered system of supports, culturally responsive teaching, and more to reduce exclusionary and aversive discipline practices.

