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June 26, 2012

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6100

Dear Chairman Kline:

Friday's conviction of former Pennsylvania State University football coach Jerry Sandusky reminds us of our Committee's responsibility to ensure our nation's laws adequately protect children from abuse. Crimes like those at issue in the Sandusky case expose weaknesses in child abuse reporting laws, especially when it comes to educational institutions, where children spend much of their lives. I wrote you back in November 2011 on the heels of the terrible revelations of alleged child sexual abuse at Pennsylvania State University and the Citadel¹ and requested Committee action to investigate child abuse reporting laws. Regrettably, no formal Committee action ensued. Today, I respectfully request, again, that you call the members of our Committee together to thoroughly examine whether federal laws adequately keep our children safe from physical and sexual abuse and whether legislative solutions should be pursued to better support local efforts to stop child abuse.

Since I last wrote to you, concern about the adequacy of existing child abuse reporting laws has not abated. For example, in addition to the Pennsylvania State University and Citadel cases, the alleged abuse of children by employees at Miramonte Elementary School in Los Angeles highlights potential significant deficiencies in the manner by which some schools investigate and

¹ See Letter from Congressman George Miller, Senior Democrat, Committee on Education and the Workforce, to Chairman John Kline, Committee on Education and the Workforce (Nov. 17, 2011), available at:

<http://democrats.edworkforce.house.gov/sites/democrats.edworkforce.house.gov/files/documents/112/pdf/letters/GMtoKlinePennStateCitadelLetter.pdf>.

The Honorable John Kline
June 26, 2012
Page 2

resolve allegations of abuse against children.² These are only a few examples among many across the country that are consistent with the findings of a December 16, 2010, report³ by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), which I requested. During its investigation, GAO found that the way in which some schools handle abuse allegations can actually result in sexual predators escaping justice and being free to continue abusing other children.⁴

Protecting children should not be a partisan issue. We all have a moral obligation to speak for child abuse victims who are unable to speak for themselves. In the past, our Committee has focused intensely on child safety issues, including passing bipartisan legislation in the House to prevent abuse in schools and residential programs for teens.⁵ We also passed on a bipartisan vote in the House the Protecting Students from Sexual and Violent Predators Act,⁶ which would help remove child predators from schools, and the Keeping All Students Safe Act,⁷ which would decrease abusive seclusion and restraint practices in schools. We must take every available and reasonable step we can to ensure that the individuals and institutions with whom we entrust our children everyday protect them from abuse.

I am prepared to work with you in scheduling a hearing and other Committee action on this critically important issue.

Sincerely,



GEORGE MILLER
Senior Democratic Member

² See NBC Southern California (n.d.). *Miramonte Abuse Scandal: Complete Coverage of the Ongoing Investigation of a South LA Elementary School*, available at: <http://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Miramonte-School-Child-Abuse-Investigation-138944079.html>.

³ U.S. Government Accountability Office. *K-12 Education: Selected Cases of Public and Private Schools That Hired or Retained Individuals with Histories of Sexual Misconduct*, GAO-11-200. Dec. 2010, available at <http://gao.gov/assets/320/313251.pdf>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act of 2009, H.R. 911, 111th Cong. (2009).

⁶ Protecting Students from Sexual and Violent Predators Act, H.R. 6547, 111th Cong. (2010).

⁷ Keeping All Students Safe Act, H.R. 4247, 111th Cong. (2010).