

Introduce Yourself to a Legislator

While calling or emailing a legislator can be intimidating, the reality is that YOU are a constituent and YOU elect your legislators. They are there to listen to you and understand your issues and concerns. **LEGISLATORS WELCOME COMMUNICATION FROM CONSTITUENTS!**

You can identify and get contact information about your Assembly Member at <http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/> and Senator at <http://www.nysenate.gov/senators>

Sample script for calling

“Hi. My name is (insert name). I am a constituent from (insert town or city) and I am a school psychologist. I am calling today to ask the Assembly Member/Senator to strongly support NYS Bill A2033/S3036. This bill would license school psychologists, which is critical to increasing access to mental health services for children.

(Insert a brief “story” or example of changes that you are seeing in the mental health needs of students. Be sure to highlight the role of school psychologists in supporting these needs.).

Please know that school psychologists are here to help, both our students and families. I am also available to provide you any resources or answer questions related to my work that may support some of your priorities. Thank you”

Sample Email

“Dear Assembly Member/Senator (insert legislator’s name),

As a constituent and school psychologist, I am asking you to **STRONGLY SUPPORT NYS Bill A2033 (Rosenthal)/S3036 (Brouk)**, which would provide for the licensure of school psychologists. School psychologists are highly trained professionals, with expertise in learning, mental health, and understanding the education system. While the “school” in school psychology defines our expertise, it does not define the only setting where our skills and services are needed. The Bill carefully defines the nature of our training and the scope of practice based upon this training. School psychologists are engaging in this practice EVERY DAY. The Bill simply opens a pathway to provide the same services beyond the four walls of the school.

(Insert a brief story or summary of your work as a school psychologist)

I know that you are well aware of the mental health crisis facing our children and families. It seems that every day, a new report is being issued about the significant mental and behavioral health challenges with our youth. 1 in 5 children ages 3–17 has a mental, emotional, behavioral, or developmental disorder. Many more are at risk of developing a disorder due to risk factors in their biology or genetics; within their families, schools, and communities; and among their peers. There is a great need for mental health professionals to provide the best available culturally appropriate care based on scientific evidence, good clinical expertise, and the unique characteristics of the child. However, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention it is estimated that only about 20% of these children who need services receive

appropriate help from mental health professionals. Part of the reason why so few children get the help that they need is because there simply are not enough mental health professionals in the community who work with young people. Families are forced on to long waitlists, have to travel great distances to access providers, or end up in the emergency room of the local hospital. None of these situations are appropriate for our children who need help.

Licensing school psychologists is a vital and necessary step to increasing access to mental health services by increasing the mental health workforce. I respectfully request your urgent action and support for A2033/S3036.

Thank you.”

Please feel free to reach out to NYASP President Christopher Van Houten, christopher.vanhouten@nyasp.org or NYASP Legislative Co-Chairs, Kelly Caci, Kelly.caci@nyasp.org or John Kelly, john.kelly@nyasp.org if you need any support or have questions.