



Eating Disorders Coalition Hosts Annual Advocacy Day Calling for More Protections from Social Media Harms and Promotion of Mental Health Education in Schools

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 19, 2023)- Yesterday, 215 advocates from 40 states and the District of Columbia took part in the Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy, & Action Virtual Advocacy Day. An additional 500 advocates sent emails to their Members of Congress. Attendees spent the day sharing their personal stories and urging their Representatives and Senators to support the Improving Mental Health and Wellness in Schools Act and the Kids Online Safety Act, two critical pieces of legislation for the eating disorders community.

The bipartisan, bicameral Improving Mental Health and Wellness in Schools Act ([S.754/H.R. 3331](#)), led by Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Cynthia Lummis (R-WY) and Representatives Kathy Manning (D-NC-06) and David Valadao (R-CA-21) would integrate mental health education, including eating disorders education, into existing K-12 local school wellness policies. This integration would provide a comprehensive approach to educating teachers and school administrators on their role in supporting mental health while also teaching children and teens the interconnectedness of physical and mental health.

The bipartisan Kids Online Safety Act ([S. 1409](#)), led by Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) would safeguard children and teens from dangerous social media platform practices that push harmful content to young users. The legislation requires technology companies be held accountable for the design features of their products that harm young users, provide enhanced controls to enable autonomy of the user, disable addictive features, opt out of algorithmic recommendations, and more.

“Advocacy Day is always an incredible experience where our larger community comes together for common good, and this year was no exception,” **said EDC Board President Christine Peat, PhD, FAED, LP.** “It is incredibly powerful to see advocates from all over the country donating their time and telling their personal stories to effect real change. The EDC simply could not achieve any of its success without the commitment and energy of advocates. We are thrilled that our community showed up in such a robust way and look forward to seeing these bills eventually pass into law.”

“It was a wonderful experience to share my story with representatives from my own state and hear their thoughts on the bills we are attempting to get supported,” **said EDC Young Adult Council Member, Camille Whitcraft.** “Hearing other youth share their stories was powerful, and I hope representatives felt the same way. Being in graduate school, I felt it was a great opportunity to share some of the research I’ve found in conjunction with my story and show representatives how many of us get into this work not only from personal experience, but to continue research in eating disorders.”

"I truly believe that the EDC has an army of parents, caregivers, and professionals, who with education and radical compassion to contest the stigma and ignorance, can fight this disease", **said New Jersey advocate and mother of 14-year-old daughter who recovered from an eating disorder, Tracy Ann Bancroft.** "Fighting eating disorder not only includes education but ethical legislation to hold accountable the predatory behavior when it comes to social media and other online platforms. It is our responsibility to protect our kids. The algorithms that target our children are not ok and are potentially dangerous and deadly."

There is great power in individuals' voices coming together for a common cause. The robust attendance and geographic diversity illustrate EDC's depth and impact as a community, and we are grateful for every advocate. EDC's advocates are making a difference by helping create a world where eating disorders are no longer misunderstood. The EDC is privileged to work alongside amazing individuals who are passionate about sharing their stories and proudly commemorate another successful day of advocacy.

*The Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action (EDC) is a Washington, D.C. based, federal advocacy organization of advocacy organizations, academics, treatment providers, family/loved ones of children with eating disorders, and people experiencing eating disorders nationwide. The EDC advances the recognition of eating disorders as a public health priority throughout the United States. Additional resources can be found at:
<https://eatingdisorderscoalition.org/>.*

Media Contact: Emily Rosenberg: erosenberg@eatingdisorderscoalition.org