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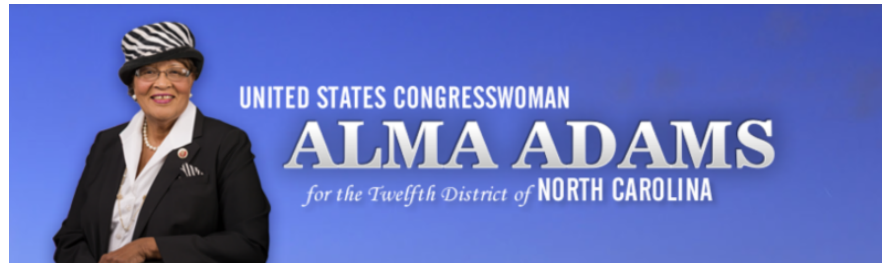
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Adams Introduces Bipartisan Bill on Eating Disorders in Schools

Alma Adams Press [sam.spencer@mail.house.gov]

Sent: Thursday, May 07, 2020 3:11 PM

To: Steve Johnston



Adams Introduces Bipartisan Bill on Eating Disorders in Schools

"As students across the country face disruptions, stress, and anxiety due to COVID-19, all of which exacerbate mental illnesses like eating disorders, the need for this legislation grows increasingly clear."

Charlotte – Congresswoman Alma S. Adams, Ph.D. (NC-12) introduced the bipartisan **Eating Disorders Prevention in Schools Act of 2020 (Eating Disorders PSA)** yesterday with **Representative Vicky Hartzler (R-MO-04)**. This Act would encourage schools to include eating disorders prevention within their Local School Wellness Policies—policies used to guide school districts to create supportive school nutrition and physical activity environments to help prevent disordered eating and eating disorders, and improve overall health outcomes of children. The bill would also ensure that mental health professionals are included in the development of Local School Wellness Policies.

"Federal nutrition education programs like Local School Wellness Programs support healthy-eating lifestyle choices for children across North Carolina and across the country," **said Rep. Alma Adams (D-NC-12), Vice Chair of the Committee on Agriculture.** "Allowing eating disorder prevention to be included in Local School Wellness Policies will promote health and well-being for students in these programs who are at risk for or affected by eating disorders."

"The Eating Disorders Prevention in Schools Act will provide students education and screening opportunities for eating disorders. As students across the country face disruptions, stress, and anxiety due to COVID-19, all of which exacerbate mental illnesses like eating disorders, the need for this legislation grows increasingly clear," **concluded Adams.**

"As a mother and a former nutrition teacher, I know how critical nutrition is for the development of our young students, both academically and physically," **said Rep. Vicky Hartzler (R-MO-04).** "Unfortunately, many of our students today battle a wide range of eating disorders that can lead to long-lasting health challenges and even death. All of these medical consequences greatly disrupt a child's development, harming their ability to learn and engage in the classroom and making it incredibly difficult for our kids to live overall healthy lives. I value the importance of our school

children and faculty having the knowledge and tools necessary to ensure our kids adopt healthy eating habits. I thank Rep. Adams for leading the effort to include eating disorder curriculum and prevention tactics as part of Local School Wellness Policies across the country."

Eating disorders will affect 30 million Americans of all body sizes. This issue is especially significant for our nation's children, with two-thirds of youth in higher weight bodies being at risk for an eating disorder. Each month, one million children engage in risky behaviors in an attempt to control their weight. Additionally, emerging research shows there's a strong correlation between food insecurity and eating disorders. With approximately 13 million U.S. children living in food insecure households, it has never been more important for us to encourage schools to recognize warning signs of disordered eating and eating disorders, and know how to help students who might be struggling.

"This legislation is an important step forward in eating disorders prevention and early identification efforts," **said Chevese Turner, the Chief Strategy & Policy Officer of the National Eating Disorders Association.** "Schools are uniquely positioned to play a part in this increasingly significant public health issue that has the second highest mortality rate of any mental health disorder and will affect over 30 million people in their lifetime in the US alone."

The Eating Disorders PSA demonstrates the importance of health and well-being for all people across the weight spectrum and prioritizes the elimination of weight stigma in the prevention and identification of eating disorders. Additional sponsors of the legislation include Rep. John Katko (R-NY), Rep. Filemon Vela (D-TX), Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), and Rep. Ted Deutch (D-FL).

Congresswoman Alma Adams has represented North Carolina's 12th Congressional District (Charlotte) since 2014 and has served on the House Committee on Agriculture since 2015, where she serves as Vice Chair of the committee. Additionally, she has served on the Education & Labor Committee since 2015 and as Chair of the Workforce Protections Subcommittee since 2019. She has served on the Financial Services Committee since 2019.

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