April 27, 2007

The Honorable Timothy F. Murphy
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC  20510

Dear Congressman Murphy:

On behalf of the Association of American Universities (AAU), an organization of 62 leading public and private research universities, I write to express our strong and enthusiastic support for the Mental Health Cooperation for Families and Schools Act of 2007, legislation that you are developing to permit colleges and universities to disclose information to parents of students who may pose a risk to their own safety or the safety of others.

At their semiannual meeting earlier this week, AAU presidents and chancellors expressed concern about the constraints that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) effectively imposes on them when they have information that students may pose a threat to themselves or others. They believe that the law presents barriers to campus officials acting in good faith to safeguard their campus communities and that greater latitude should be extended to university officials to communicate with parents or guardians of students who present such a threat. Your bill is intended to solve precisely this problem.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue. We appreciate the opportunity to work with you to refine and secure enactment of this important legislation.

Yours sincerely,

Robert M. Berdahl
President

cc: John C. Vaughn, AAU Executive Vice President