



Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence • Institute of Behavioral Science • University of Colorado at Boulder  
1440 15th Street Boulder, Colorado 80302 • t 303.492.1032 f 303.492.2151 • [www.colorado.edu/cspv/](http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/)

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October 31, 2018

Dear Colleagues:

I am writing to offer my strongest support for Susan Payne's nomination for the Nathan Davis Award for Outstanding Government Service. Dr. Delbert Elliott, our Center's Founding Director, and I have worked closely with Ms. Payne, for the past twenty years, and I can't imagine anyone more qualified or deserving to be honored with this award. Ms. Payne has dedicated the past two decades of her life to develop and implement Safe2Tell in Colorado. Safe2Tell's existence and success is a direct result of Ms. Payne's dedication, persistence and leadership.

Safe2Tell, a critical prevention strategy that supports public health by giving youth a trusted way to voice their concerns about safety issues in their schools or communities. The results have been staggering. Since 2004: 1,513 planned school attacks and 1,873 threats have been averted; 8,042 youth suicides have been interrupted; nearly 2,000 threat and risk assessments have been conducted, resulting in early intervention; and more than 4,750 support and safety plans have been created for students that need help. In all, about 60,000 reports have been processed.

Since the *Columbine Review Commission's* Report in 2001 and the federal government's Safe School Initiative in 2002 were published, we've known what to do to promote safety in schools across the United States. Each of these studies came to the same conclusion: critical "red flag" behavioral information about the perpetrators was known to some but not shared with the authorities who could take preventative measures.

Colorado developed the Safe2tell program in response to the recommendations of these reports and the voiced concerns of students. After the Columbine High School shooting, Colorado Attorney General Ken Salazar, Dr. Delbert Elliott, and Ms. Payne traveled together to every county in Colorado. They heard first hand that most students didn't feel comfortable discussing safety concerns with adults. Students feared retaliation from other students or thought they would get in trouble themselves if they shared information. Students also didn't know what safety concerns they should report, how to talk about those concerns, or who they should tell. Students who did report safety issues felt that the adults did not respond effectively.

Ms. Payne worked tirelessly with numerous statewide partners to launch Safe2Tell in 2004. Today it is a 24/7 live, law enforcement led, anonymous reporting tool designed to accept reports whenever a Colorado youth or concerned adult perceives a threat to their safety or the safety of others. Safe2tell informs local law enforcement and a multidisciplinary team at the school of the tip and in all cases, there is a follow up process. This process provides accountability by informing stakeholders of the actions taken based upon the tip. A three-pronged framework ensures Safe2Tell's effectiveness: (1) education, engagement, and awareness, (2) protected intelligence gathering and information sharing, and (3) accountability and follow-up.

It was not easy for Safe2Tell to go from a good idea to a nationally recognized best practice, but it has largely due to Ms. Payne's dedicated and passionate leadership. Safe2Tell was first funded with seed money provided by the Colorado Trust Foundation as part of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence Safe Communities Safe Schools project. It then operated for ten years as a public-private partnership combining safety resources of the Colorado State Patrol, the Colorado Department of Public Safety, and the Colorado Department of Law with the oversight of an independent, non-profit Board of Directors. During those ten years, Ms. Payne kept Safe2Tell afloat with

grants and donations, but it wasn't easy – especially during the recession in 2008. Finally, in 2014, bipartisan state leadership successfully supported legislation to provide state funding for Safe2Tell.

Through the Safe to Tell Act 2018, a bipartisan bill introduced by U.S. Representatives Mike Coffman (R-CO) and James Himes (D-CT), the nation now has the opportunity to create a national reporting infrastructure modeled after Colorado's Safe2Tell program. The bill would provide states with funding to establish and maintain an anonymous, 24/7 tip-line to alert law enforcement about potential threats and an avenue by which systems in each state could communicate with each other. If this bill passes, the public health impact of Safe2Tell will be realized nationally.

Ms. Payne has focused her career on continuing the development and expansion of school safety efforts in Colorado and across the nation. In the aftermath of the tragedy in Parkland, she provided technical assistance to 24 states. She consults regularly with the United States Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center to support their studies of school violence and bystanders, and the development of their threat assessment guide.

Ms. Payne's passion, commitment and courage to serve the public health of this country by ensuring the safety of children is unprecedented. I have been honored to work with her over the past twenty years and our state and nation are all benefitting from her exemplary work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Beverly Kingston', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Beverly Kingston, Ph.D.  
Senior Research Associate and Director  
Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence