October 18, 2006

The Honorable Steven Rothman
2303 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Rothman:

On behalf of the 30,500 members of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), I would like to thank you for your continued support of the Secure Our Schools (SOS) program.

Though schools remain one of the safest places for our children and youth, extreme incidents of violence in Colorado and Pennsylvania have threatened our peace of mind. NASSP also mourns the loss of one of our own members, John Klang, whose heroic efforts in Cazenovia, Wisconsin, potentially saved the lives of his students at Weston High School. Principals, like John Klang, play a key role in ensuring that our schools are safe and secure. They are responsible for creating a school crisis plan, implementing visitor check-in procedures, conducting evacuation drills, and ensuring that safety equipment is regularly inspected. All the while, principals are expected to be educational visionaries and instructional leaders and comply with federal laws, such as the No Child Left Behind Act.

Grants under the SOS program help principals to ensure teachers’ and students’ safety by covering the cost of security measures such as the placement and use of metal detectors, locks, lighting, and other deterrent measures; security assessments; security training for students and school personnel; coordination with local law enforcement; and other measures that could significantly increase the school’s security.

Although the SOS program is authorized at $30 million, funding has been woefully inadequate at only $15 million in FY 2005-06. Our schools alone should not be solely responsible for funding for these vital security measures, and they deserve a stronger commitment from the federal government. I support your efforts to secure $30 million for the SOS program in FY 2008 and look forward to working with you on this issue in the future.

Sincerely,

Gerald N. Tirozzi, Ph.D.
Executive Director