



August 9, 2018

Dear Secretary DeVos:

The National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) writes to you in your position as Chair of the Federal Commission on School Safety to express our dismay and displeasure regarding the listening session of the Commission in Cheyenne, Wyoming this week. Specifically, the problems with the sign up protocol which resulted in restricting stakeholder involvement at the listening session.

NDRN wrote to you on July 27th to “strongly encourage the Federal Commission on School Safety to publically notice planned Commission listening sessions, field visits, and meetings at least one week in advance of the scheduled date.” We were pleased to see that the Wyoming listening session was noticed with more advance notice than prior listening sessions, however, our initial reaction has been significantly tempered by feedback we received concerning technical issues experienced attempting to register as a speaker. Error messages were received, attempts were made to contact the Commission via the website to resolve this issue, but no response was received and then, upon showing up at the listening session, were told they could only participate as an observer.

NDRN wishes to be clear – it is simply not acceptable that the listening sessions thus far have been held with far too little public notice and that even when 6 days of public notice was given for the Wyoming session, the sign-up procedure for public delivery of comments before the Commission quite literally denied individuals the right to be heard – the very opportunity these listening sessions purportedly offer. As was mentioned in our letter dated July 27th, we appreciate that there is a website for written comments to submitted, however presumably these listening sessions are held because the Commission recognizes the importance for individuals around the country to be heard, in person, and to state their beliefs, in person, about school safety.

NDRN, like so many others across America, recognizes that school safety is a nuanced and complex issue. We only request that individuals who wish to be heard in a public listening session before the Commission are actually able to do so.

Should you have any questions or wish to follow up, please do not hesitate to contact Amanda Lowe, Senior Public Policy Analyst at Amanda.lowe@ndrn.org

Sincerely,

Curt Decker
Executive Director