



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

September 2, 2022

The Honorable Ted Budd
U.S. House of Representatives
103 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Via Electronic Delivery

Dear Congressman Budd:

I write in response to your inquiry of the Governor's Office regarding safety protocols for students in North Carolina's public schools. In your letter, you cite a case from Virginia and an internal investigation at the UNC School of the Arts.

Both cases are horrifying, and I trust that Virginia authorities as well as the UNC Board of Governors, which oversees the UNC School of the Arts, are acting decisively to punish lawbreakers and prevent crimes from happening again.

You should know that safety at North Carolina's schools is of utmost importance, and that background checks and investigations are governed by state law. All public schools require a criminal background check for teachers. State law also requires an annual check against Sex Offender Registries for contractors who work with children. Conviction of a sex-related crime results in revocation of a teacher's license and is also grounds for immediate dismissal by the local board of education. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction can provide you with additional information about these requirements.

Unfortunately, state law does not require these safeguards for private church schools or non-sectarian academies, even if they receive state funds for student tuition. Some private schools perform criminal background checks voluntarily, but neither the background check nor even teacher licensure is required for these schools in North Carolina.

We can work together by asking for more accountability from these schools, and by redoubling our work to support child abuse experts who can quickly investigate and help prosecute abusers if necessary. Supporting H.R. 485, The Stronger Child Abuse Prevention And Treatment Act, which you voted against last year, would be a good first step.

I trust the safety of children is of paramount importance to you and encourage you to work on behalf of our children's safety in Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Geoffrey Coltrane". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

Geoffrey Coltrane
Senior Education Advisor