**Overview: Focus on the Guidance**

We see the fight to protect the 2014 Federal School Discipline Guidance as distinct in many ways from the current debate about how to best respond to armed intruders entering school buildings intent on harming mass numbers of people. If people try to draw you into a debate that suggests that keeping the guidance in place is related to these kinds of incidents, here are some of the ways they are distinct that you can use to clarify and the re-direct the conversation back to protecting the guidance:

* The guidance focuses on internal school climate and ongoing school discipline practices, rather than acute threats posed by intruders.
* The guidance articulates the obligations schools have under current civil rights law to conduct school discipline in non-discriminatory ways - It does not impose any new requirements and does not represent any new laws that are up for debate.
* While questions concerning the prevention of mass shootings in schools are extremely important, preventing racial discrimination in school discipline is equally critical, which is why the Department of Education must maintain Federal School Discipline Guidance.

**Does the guidance make it harder for school staff to act when they suspect a student may become violent?**

* Not at all. The guidance seeks to address racial discrimination in the application of school discipline - it does not preclude school staff working fairly to address issues with any student as they come up.
* Additionally, the guidance provides resources for how to integrate positive school discipline practices that get to the root of the problem when school staff are concerned about a student, rather than pushing students out of school who then receive no support.

**Do you disagree with the Parkland students about what would make schools safer?**

* It’s wonderful that the nation is listening to the Parkland students about their solutions to the problem of mass shootings; We as students and parents also want our solutions to the problem of school pushout to be listened to, and many of our solutions are included in the guidance package.

**Quick responses when you don’t know what to say:**

* We want safe schools for ALL students.
* Students’ freedom from discrimination is not up for debate.
* Schools do not have to choose between keeping students safe and keeping them in school. They can and must do both.
* I’m not an expert in how to prevent mass shootings in school, but I am an expert on the school- to-prison pipeline after seeing (myself/my child/members of my community) pushed out of school due to racial discrimination.