

March 10, 2019

Dear Representative Doherty,

I am writing to ask for your support for School Social Workers. Two important bills are going to be heard Monday 3/11/19 HB 2441, which clarifies that School Social Workers can implement comprehensive school counseling framework and HB 2940 establishes a pilot program to increase public schools served by school social workers and appropriates 20 million for districts to apply for grants to do this.

School social work services are essential in schools in responding to students who are:

- \* Impacted by trauma
- \* Facing housing instability and homelessness
- \* Dealing with the effects of poverty
- \* Living in homes with domestic violence
- \* Struggling with mental health issues
- \* Supporting marginalized and historically under-served communities
- \* Implementing systems of change
- \* Dealing with the impacts of substance abuse

School social workers also have the training and education that makes them uniquely qualified to understand and develop systems that support students and families with the biggest barriers to academic achievement and subsequent life success. All school social workers have explicit education around systemic racism and discrimination, which is a central factor in Oregon's persistently low graduation rates for students of color.

As a certified school social worker for the past 22 years with experience and training from outside of the state, I was extremely disappointed to find out that school social workers were not valued and are under utilized in Oregon. We must provide more social-emotional supports in Oregon's schools if we are to see improved academic success.

I am urging you to vote YES on HB 2441 and HB 2940! These bills will give Oregon's school children the chance to:

- \* Access mental health services at school
- \* Connect with resources and agencies that provide support for basic needs, such as housing, food and utilities
- \* Have assistance in navigating complex systems within schools districts, including special education
- \* Get connected to resources for domestic violence services
- \* Get connected to resources for sexually minority youth and families
- \* Get connected to culturally specific resources and supports
- \* Referrals and connections to youth and adult substance abuse providers and services

Thank you for your consideration and support!

Sincerely,  
Wendy Post, MSW, LCSW, RPT  
Certified School Social Worker