

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 and struggling with mental health issues and dealing with the impacts of substance abuse. As you know, students impacted by these circumstances often have barriers to school attendance and achievement.

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.

My personal experience seeing school social workers make a difference for students includes facilitating access to outside services for marginalized families, addressing systemic barriers to school success, and using outside networks to better advocate for students' individual needs.

We are 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 and connect with resources and agencies that provide support for basic needs. School social workers are an integral part of a school team and can advocate with a wholistic approach that addresses individual needs in pursuit of providing all students with a deserving chance at meaningful success, inside and outside of the school environment.

Thank you for your support,

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