

Dear Representative Doherty,

My name is Mary Krogh and I have been privileged to be a school social worker in Oregon for over 20 years. I have had a number of wonderful roles that supported students and their families with academic achievement that helped support subsequent life success. Ironically though, I have never had the job title of school social worker. Different positions that I have held include working for the Multnomah County Touchstone Program, managing an ESL Welcome Center, working on Portland Public Schools K-8 Attendance Program and my current role as the Coordinating of Drug and Alcohol Support for students in Portland Public Schools.

Two things have driven the fact that I have never had the job title of a school social worker. One of those was the lack of that credential and role in Oregon schools until 2012. Despite that, the unique education and training that I received as a social worker received prepared me for the variety of positions I have held that have required a deep understanding of institutionalized racism and systemic barriers that marginalized communities face in attaining educational equity and school success.

School social workers are uniquely qualified to provide specialized and critically needed services in education, such as intervening and providing mental health services, connecting students and families with resources for basic needs, and delivering trauma informed assistance. A key component of social work education builds an understanding of how racism and poverty influences children and families and what we can do to alleviate the impacts on learning. This is critically important as Oregon works to address persistent racial disparities in graduation rates.

HB 2940 and 2441 gives Oregon an important opportunity to address some of our biggest challenges in education. As a state, we will be finally able to offer supports to students dealing with trauma and the impact that has for them and their classmates. We will also be able to put programming in place that will be culturally responsive and get at the root of our low graduation rates.

HB 2441 has no budget impact, but it will support schools to make the best choice in hiring, especially for schools with large numbers of historically under-served students. HB 2940 will provide a substantial investment in personnel who have the education, training and expertise to significantly impact and improve educational outcomes for Oregon's students.

Thank you for supporting both pieces of legislation and let me know how else I can advocate!

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Krogh, LCSW LSSW