

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 underserved 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.

My personal experience seeing school social workers make a difference for students includes seeing students firsthand experience the benefits of acquiring the resources necessary to succeed in school. For many students around the country, school may very well be the safest place for them – let's provide further resources for these students to make sure that school is always a safe, equitable, yet fairly challenging environment for all of our nation's youth and young adults.

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
- 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
- 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 support,

Josh Kreisman
Lincoln High School Counseling Intern