

To: House Committee on Rules

From: Meagan Gray, Licensed School Counselor

Date: May 6, 2019

I am writing in opposition to House Bill 2876-1. I oppose HB 2876-1 for several reasons.

Firstly, school social workers and other licensed personnel do not receive training in their graduate work on the development and implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program that meets the academic, career, and social/emotional needs of our students. HB 2876-1 does not address this gap in training for current SSWs or other personnel (e.g. Child Development Specialists, School Psychologists, etc.) to gain the competencies for implementing a comprehensive school counseling program--specifically as it relates to career and college readiness. Portland State University is the only SSW preparation provider, and have a policy around not duplicating program components. Therefore, SSWs do not receive the same comprehensive training--that includes academic, career, and social/emotional components--as school counselors. While the most recent amended language in the bill states that the professionals implementing a comprehensive school counseling program may not operate outside the scope of their license, this creates a vague and dangerous blurred line for districts and schools to interpret. To this end, this bill will also create a need for districts to consider revising or developing new job descriptions for personnel who will implement a comprehensive school counseling program which will thus impact how districts advertise open positions for implementing a comprehensive school counseling program.

From a fiscal perspective, this bill may also create hardships for school districts who are already facing budget constraints and cuts. The aforementioned skill and knowledge gaps of SSWs or other personnel hired to deliver a comprehensive school counseling program will likely result in schools and districts paying the cost for additional training on implementing a comprehensive school counseling program.

The role of the school counselor is no longer just to hand out college applications, make schedule changes for students, or wait around for a crisis to occur. Today's school counselors are vital members of our schools that help all students in the areas of academic achievement, career development, and social/emotional development to ensure that students become productive, well-adjusted members of society. Our training and our role is fundamentally different from that of others, including SSWs, Child Development Specialists, and School Psychologists, and HB 2876-1 does not acknowledge these differences.

I urge you not to support HB 2876-1.

Sincerely,

**Meagan Gray**

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