



May 6, 2019

Dear Honorable Paul Hovey, Chair of the House Committee on Rules,

The Oregon School Social Worker Association (OSSWA) would like your support in passing HB 2876-2. We have been working with many stakeholders including TSPC, COSA, ODE, and OEA in order to clarify the language as to who is already qualified and implementing comprehensive counseling program in schools. Due to some previous misconceptions of what ODE and the law states, districts have been confused as to who is eligible and were thereby not aware of their ability to hire candidates that may be more suited for their school needs, such as licensed school social workers. Like school counselors, licensed school social workers have graduate level course training and complete internships in the schools. In addition they do another year of internship in the community in some other social work agency, giving them additional training in social work resources that can be invaluable, especially when working in a Title 1 school.

As with other bills brought forward this year, the intention behind this bill is in part to bring better mental health supports to students and families across the state, especially where resources are limited. By implementing this bill, it will increase the number of qualified candidates available for districts to hire, increase access to social services for the most vulnerable, and allow schools more flexibility in hiring those who would best fit their community and culture.

As an organization we are excited to see all of the support by so many for this bill and are proud to be one of the organizations behind the support of House Bill 2876-2.

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Founder and current board member of OSSWA