



Testimony on House Bill 4132
February 3, 2020
House Committee on Education
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Good afternoon Chair Doherty, Vice Chairs Alonso Leon and Helt, and members of the committee. My name is Deborah Riddick. I am the Director of Government Relations for the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). We represent 15,000 registered nurses throughout the state, as well as our member organization, the Nurse Practitioners of Oregon. The ONA supports HB 4132, which would require the Oregon Health Authority to administer and collect data from student health surveys and consult with the Department of Education to convene and engage with our adolescent students in survey creation.

It's been well-documented that unmet physical, emotional, and mental health needs negatively impact a student's ability to remain engaged and ready to learn. It has also been established that health status and educational success are interrelated; healthy students make better learners.

The Oregon Healthy Teens 2017 survey revealed that...

- 39% of 8th graders and 38% of 11th graders reported that they hadn't had a physical in more than a year.
- 8% of 8th graders and 12% of 11th graders rated their emotional and mental health as poor.
- 20% of 8th graders and 18% of 11th graders reported unmet physical needs; 19% of 8th graders and 22% of 11th graders reported unmet emotional and mental health needs.

It's important to note that because this data relies on self-reporting by students, it's likely to reflect an underreporting of actual need. Our students have consistently participated in the surveys as a way to convey their needs and preferences; we have a responsibility to listen.

The ONA supports HB 4132 as an appropriate legislative response to ensure we keep listening. The bill requires funding to support ongoing efforts and would formally enlist students in the creation and revision process. Enabling students to be a part of the process has numerous benefits. 1) It sends a clear message that their perspective is valued. 2) It helps with the translation of academic issues into related content. 3) It instills ownership of the survey and obtains credibility throughout the student body. 4) It surfaces issues that adults may not be aware and provides an opportunity to view health and intervention through the unique student lens. 5) It provides a valuable, and possibly life-changing, civics lesson on the administrative process and the importance of our form of government. Our schools are the institutions where critical thinking, collaboration, and problem solving are formed and practical experience is preferred to theory to improve retention.

As a registered nurse, I can attest that physical, emotional, and mental health services for students are most effective when trusted relationships with providers exist. Respecting the value of students, the intended end users of the surveys is consistent with best practice for survey development. Providing a consistent and reliable source of funding ensures that we have the data needed to respond to the needs of our future leaders and workforce. Given all our students are facing in this tumultuous time of pandemic, environmental challenges, increasing violence in schools, and a never-ceasing deluge negative internet information, we have an obligation to use every opportunity to engage and support their success. The ONA supports this HB 4132 and urges the Committee to do the same